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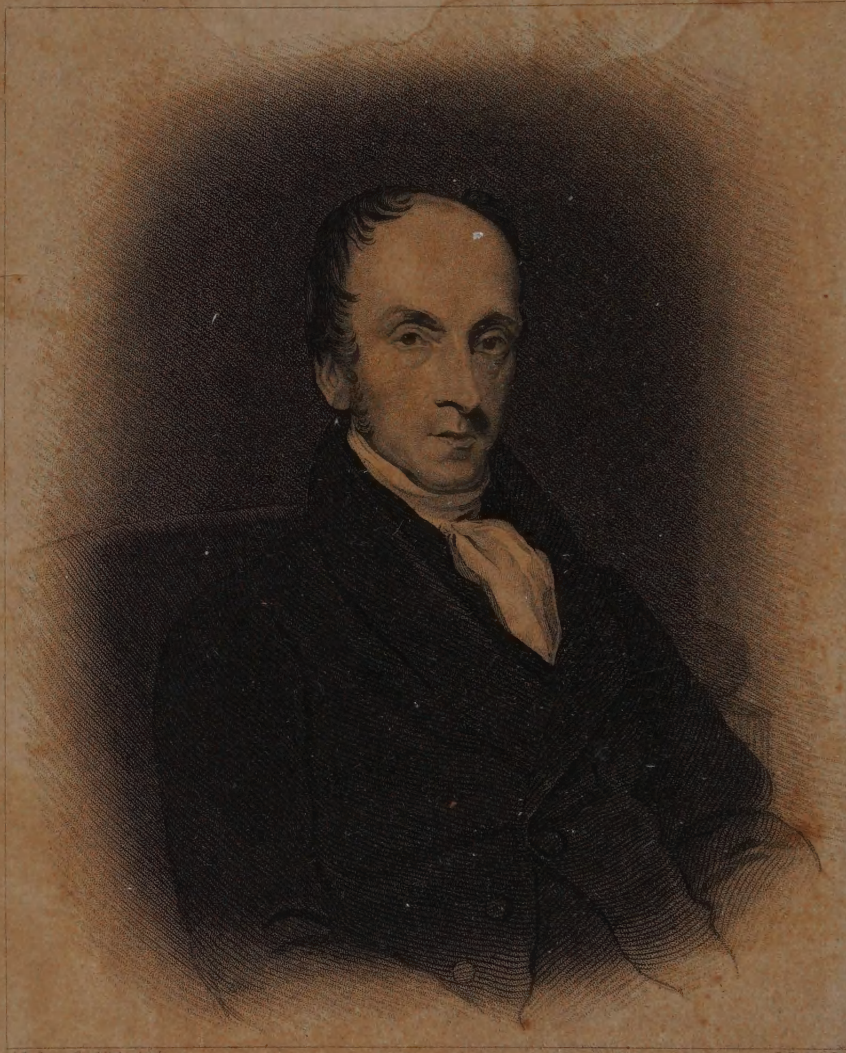

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MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

THE REV. RICHARD WATSON,

Late Secretary to the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

BY THOMAS JACKSON.

THERE is a sort of God's dear servants who walk in perfectness; and they have a degree of clarity and Divine knowledge more than we can discourse of, and more certain than the demonstrations of geometry, brighter than the sun, and indeficient as the light of heaven. As a flame touches a flame, and combines into splendour and to glory; so is the spirit of a man united unto Christ by the Spirit of God.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

NEW-YORK,

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1834.

PREFACE.

THE years 1832 and 1833 were a season of great and affecting mortality among the Wesleyan ministers. During this period several men of leading influence in that body were separated from their brethren and the Church, and called to resign a charge which they had fulfilled with superior fidelity and success. Of this number the most distinguished were, Dr. Adam Clarke, and the Rev. Richard Watson; both of whom were universally esteemed and beloved for their piety, attainments, and usefulness. The loss of these excellent men has been painfully felt; and their memory will long be cherished by a large circle of friends, and by the numerous congregations to whom they were accustomed to preach the word of life.

In the following pages an attempt is made to trace the personal history of Mr. Watson; and though the narrative has been compiled under many disadvantages, chiefly arising from the pressure of other engagements, it is presumed that the work contains a faithful, though inadequate, record of his life and labours. The writer will always consider it as one of his greatest privileges, and one for which he will ever be thankful to Divine Providence, that he was favoured with the friendship of this great and good man, and for several years lived in habits of constant intercourse and correspondence with him. They have conversed together on almost every subject of theology, and of public interest, as well as upon all the literary projects in which Mr. Watson was engaged. To give an honest and just view of his habits, character, and opinions, has been the writer's aim; but no one is more sensible than himself that his descriptions fall vastly short of the original. It would have required a pen like his own to do full justice to Mr. Watson's intellectual endowments, and his great exertions in the cause of Christianity.

To those friends who have kindly furnished materials for this volume, the cordial thanks of the writer are due, and are very sincerely tendered. It is unnecessary to specify the names of the parties in this place, as they are generally mentioned in the body of the work, in connection with their respective communications. Mr. Watson's correspondence, of which many specimens are given, will be found to possess a more than ordinary value, on account of its piety, elegance, and variety.

HISTORICAL LIBRARY

No man was more deeply impressed than the subject of these memoirs, with the conviction, that devotedness to God is the principal end of human life; and it is earnestly hoped that the exhibition of his own character will tend to promote this most important of all objects. Such an example of sanctified talent, and of holy zeal, in the midst of pain and wasting disease, has seldom been witnessed. He had learned the great practical lesson of connecting the labours of time with the awards of eternity; and hence arose his impressions concerning both the sacredness and vanity of the present life.

"Sacred how high, and vain how low,
He knew not here, but died to know."

LONDON, *March 25th*, 1834

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

Mr. Watson's Parentage—Birth—Delicate Health—Early Education—Religious Training—Death of a Sister—Fraternal Conduct—Removal to Lincoln—Education in that City—Proposal that he should enter the Army—Love of Reading—Apprenticed to a Joiner—Personal Appearance—Moral Character—Conversion—Fervent Piety—Singular Accidents, ... Page 13

CHAPTER II.

Developement of Mr. Watson's mental Character—Death of his Grandmother—Beginning of his Ministry—State of the Villages near Lincoln—Labours as a Local Preacher—Opposition—Visit to Newark—Freedom from his Apprenticeship—Labours in the Newark Circuit—Appointed to the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Circuit—Character and Usefulness—Thirst for Knowledge—Desultory Nature of his Studies—Removal to the Castle-Donington Circuit—Henry's Method for Prayer—Winchesterianism, ... 24

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Watson's removal to the Leicester Circuit—Method of Study—Case of strong Temptation—Poetical Composition—Appointment to the Derby Circuit—Success of his preaching in Derby—First Publication—Disputes in the Methodist Connection—Character and Labours in the Derby Circuit—Admission into full Connection with the Conference—Appointment to the Hinckley Circuit—Begins the Study of Hebrew—Theological Studies—Indiscretion—Reported to have embraced heterodox Opinions—Unkindly treated—Retires from the Itinerant Ministry—Did not hold the Tenets imputed to him—Enters into Business—Marriage—Divine Call to the Ministry—Becomes a private Member of the Methodist New Connection—Enters upon the Ministry in that Body—Appointment to the Manchester Circuit, ... 37

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Watson's Satire upon the immoderate Use of Instrumental Music in Public Worship—Approval of the Discipline of the New Connection—Memoirs of William Bradbury and John Cash—Sermon on Religious Meditation—Sermon on Sunday Schools—Letter to Mr. Edmondson—Zeal and Labours—Appointed to the Liverpool Circuit—Letters to the Messrs. Faulkner—Verses on Charity—Admitted into full Connection with the Conference—Writes the Annual Address to the Societies—Appointed to Liverpool—Writes a History of that Town, and of the Reign of George III.—Jeu-d'esprit—Commences the Liverpool Courier—Letter to Mr. John Faulkner—Writes the Address to the Societies in 1808—Returned a third Year to Liverpool—Nature of his Preaching—Publishes an Answer to Mr. Roscoe, ... 54

CHAPTER V.

Failure of Mr. Watson's health—Returned to Liverpool as a Supernumerary—Letter to Mr. John Faulkner—Writes Verses entitled "Enjoyments"—Memoir of the Rev. James Parry—Mr. Watson's views of Church Government—The Rev. Robert Nicholson—Providential Escape—Appointed to the Manchester Circuit—Publishes a Letter on Lord Sidmouth's Bill—Character of that Measure—Failure of Mr. Watson's health—Retirement from the Methodist New Connection—Returns to Liverpool—Unites himself to the Wesleyan Body—Letters to Mr. Absalom Watkin, ... 78

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Watson returns to the Wesleyan Itinerancy—Appointed to the Wakefield Circuit—Character of his Preaching—Assists at the re-opening of the Methodist Chapel at Halifax—Letter to his dying Father—Letter to Mr. Makinson—Preaches at the opening of a new Chapel at Armley—Letter to Mr. Makinson—Matthew Shackleton—Letters to Mr. Watkin—Outline of a Sermon on the Trial of Faith, Page 93.

CHAPTER VII.

Departure of Dr. Coke from England—Formation of a Methodist Missionary Society in Leeds—State of the Methodist Missions—Mr. Watson's Sermon on that Occasion—Writes an Address in behalf of the Methodist Missions—Speech at a Missionary Meeting at Halifax—Assists in forming a Missionary Society in Hull, and another at Sheffield—Speech on a similar Occasion in Wakefield—Letters to Messrs. Makinson and Watkin, ... 107

CHAPTER VIII.

Restoration of Peace in Europe—Mr. Watson's Sermon on that Occasion—Missionary Societies formed in various Places—Mr. Watson's Zeal in the Missionary Cause—Diversity of Opinion concerning Missionary Meetings—Decision of Conference on the Subject—Influence of Missionary Meetings upon the Methodist Connection—Mr. Watson's Conduct in his Circuit—Reproof to an impatient Hearer—Removal to the Hull Circuit—Opening of a new Chapel in Hull—Mr. Watson's Usefulness—His Views of congregational Singing—Letter to Mr. Walton, of Wakefield—Missionary Meeting in London—Letter to Mr. Walton—Tale of Robbery—Death of Dr. Coke—Mr. Watson opens the new Chapel at Newark—Attack upon him in one of the Hull Newspapers—His Letter in self defence—Letter to Mr. Walton—Mr. Watson's Conduct as a Colleague—Providential Deliverance, ... 123

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Watson visits London to assist at a Missionary Anniversary—His Sermon in the City-Road Chapel—Missionary Anniversary at Hull—Extract from the Report—False Alarm—Difficulty in preparing for the Pulpit—Mr. Watson's Removal to London—Appointed one of the General Secretaries to the Wesleyan Missions—Manner in which he discharged his official Duties—Letter to Mr. Edmondson—Letter to Dr. Ellis—Letters to Mr. Garbutt—Extracts from the General Missionary Report for the Year 1816, ... 141

CHAPTER X.

Attacks upon the West India Mission—Mr. Watson's Defence of that Mission—Speech at the Anniversary of the Bible Society—Conference of 1817—Mr. Watson's re-appointment to London—Letter to Dr. Ellis—Missionary Report for 1817—Mr. Watson preaches at the opening of a new Chapel in Oxford—Singular Adventure on that Occasion, ... 158

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Watson's Pamphlet on the Eternal Sonship of Christ—Extracts on the Use of Reason in Religion—Mr. Robert Hall's Opinion of Mr. Watson's Pamphlet—Unkind Reply to it—Consequences of Dr. Clarke's Theory—Resolution of Conference in regard to the Doctrine of the Eternal Sonship of Christ—Plan of the General Wesleyan Missionary Society—Arrival of two Priests of Budhoo from India—Letter to Mr. Walton—Conference of 1818—Formation of the General Chapel Fund—Mr. Watson's Removal to the London West Circuit—Preaches before the Sunday School Union—Extracts from his Sermon—Attends an Ordination of Missionaries at Bristol, ... 174

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Watson's Address in the City-Road Chapel, on the Appointment of a Number of Missionaries—His Views of the Missionary Character and Work—Report of the Missionary Society for the Year 1818—Unsettled State of the Nation—Mr. Watson's loyal and patriotic Exertions—Letter to Miss Smith—Embarrassed State of the Mission Fund—Appeal to the Public in its behalf—Annual Meeting of the Missionary Society in 1819—Sir Alexander Johnston—Conference of 1819—Pastoral Address to the Methodist Societies—Instructions to the Wesleyan Missionaries—First Report of the General Chapel Fund, . Page 192

CHAPTER XIII.

Missionary Report for the Year 1819—Letter to Mr. Garbutt—Mr. Watson visits Cornwall, accompanied by Mr. Bunting—Mission in Southern Africa—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in the Year 1820—Letter to Mr. Walton—Conference of 1820—Visit of Mr. Emory, from America—Pastoral Address to the Methodist Societies—Mr. Watson's Appointment a third Year to the London West Circuit—His Correspondence with the Missionaries—Letter to the Rev. William D. Goy, ... 217

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Southey's "Life of Wesley"—Brief View of Mr. Wesley's Doctrine—Mr. Southey's defective Views of Religion—Mr. Watson publishes "Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley"—Extracts from that Work—Death of the Rev. Joseph Benson—Missionary Report for the Year 1820—New South Wales—New-Zealand—The West Indies—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in 1821—The Rev. William Ward—Remarks on Missionary Meetings—Letter to Mr. Walton, ... 232

CHAPTER XV.

The Conference of 1821—Letter to Mr. Walton—To his Daughter—Mr. Watson's Appointment to the Office of Resident Missionary Secretary—Becomes a private Member of a Class—Letter to the Rev. Robert Young—Missionary Tour in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire—Letter to Mrs. Watson—Mr. Watson's Contributions to the Wesleyan Magazine—Doctrine of the witness of the Spirit—Sermon on Man magnified—Begins to write his Theological Institutes—Missionary Report for 1821—Mission in Ceylon—New-Holland—New-Zealand—Western and Southern Africa—Income of the Missionary Society—Mr. Watson visits Cornwall—Letter to Mr. Walton, ... 250

CHAPTER XVI.

Mr. Watson's spirit at Missionary Anniversaries—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in 1822—Speech of the Rev. George Collison—Instruction of Missionaries—Letters to Dr. Ellis—Letter to the Rev. Elijah Hoole—Missionary Report for the year 1822—Letter to Dr. Ellis—Mr. Watson publishes the first part of his Theological Institutes—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in 1823—Letter to Dr. Ellis—Letter to Mr. Walton—The Rev. Messrs. Sargent and Lloyd killed on their way to the Conference—Letter to Mr. Walton—Letter to Miss Walton, on the Death of her Sister—Death of the Rev. William Ward—Projected Mission in Palestine—Letter to Dr. M'Allum—The Rev. Charles Cook's Visit to Jerusalem—Mr. Watson writes in Defence of the Witness of the Spirit—His Sermon on "Man Magnified by the Divine Regard"—Letter on Organs in Methodist Chapels, ... 261

CHAPTER XVII.

Mr. Watson publishes the second Part of his Theological Institutes—Letter to Mr. Walton—Persecution in Barbadoes—The Argument a priori in proof of a First Cause—Dr. Samuel Clarke's Demonstration—Divinity of Christ—Mission-

ary Report for 1823—Projected Mission to Jerusalem—Mission in Ceylon—In the West Indies—Catechisms of the Wesleyan Methodists—Mr. Watson preaches on the Mission to the Negroes at the Anniversary of 1824—Letters to Miss Watson, ... Page 280

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Watson visits Oxford—Conference of 1824—Letters to his Daughter—First Report of the Anti-Slavery Society—Agitations in the West Indies—Letter to the Right Hon. Wilmot Horton—Letter to the Rev. Elijah Hoole—Letter to the Rev. Frederick England—Missionary Report of 1824—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in 1825—Letter to Mr. Garbutt—Debate in the House of Commons on the Riot in Barbadoes—Sir R. W. Horton—Singular Impression—Conference of 1825—Address to the Societies—Letter to the Rev. Robert Young—Mr. Watson publishes the third Part of his Theological Institutes—Notices concerning it, ... 291

CHAPTER XIX.

State of the Mission Fund at the End of the Year 1825—Appeals for farther Exertions—Missionary Report for 1825—Mr. Watson publishes a Tract against Popery—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in 1826—Loss of the Maria Mail Boat, and of five Missionaries, &c—Panic of 1825-6—Mr. Watson assists in opening a new Chapel in Manchester—Letter to Dr. Ellis—Death of Joseph Butterworth, Esq.—Mr. Watson preaches and publishes his funeral Sermon—The British Senate—Abolition of Slavery—Mr. Watson is elected President of the Conference—Letters to Mrs. Watson—Mr. Watson's Conduct as President—Letter to a young Preacher—Mr. Watson attends a Missionary Meeting at Leeds—Letter to Mrs. Watson—Letter to Dr. Ellis—Mr. Watson publishes the fourth Part of his Theological Institutes, ... 309

CHAPTER XX.

Missionary Report for 1826—Letter to Mrs. Watson—Mr. Watson's Visit to Scotland—Letter to Mrs. Watson from Glasgow—Mr. Watson visits Cornwall and Ireland—Letter to Mrs. Watson—Attends the Conference in Manchester in 1827—Letters to Mrs. Watson—Delivers an Address to the Young Preachers—The most useful kind of Preaching—Mr. Watson's Appointment to Manchester—Private Studies—Ministry—Conduct as a Superintendent and Christian Pastor—Sermon against a Musical Festival—Personal Character—Attention to his Circuit, ... 325

CHAPTER XXI.

Missionary Report for 1827—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in 1828—Benefit of the Scriptures—Mr. Watson publishes the fifth Part of his Theological Institutes—Remarks on Calvinism—Anecdote of the Rev. Rowland Hill—The Conference of 1828—Attempts to subvert the Methodist Discipline—Mr. Watson publishes his "Affectionate Address"—Pamphlets of the Rev. Daniel Isaac—Two Replies to Mr. Watson's Address—Character of those Publications—Letter on Mr. Watson's early History—Letter on his future Appointment—Report of the Missionary Society for 1828—Letter to Mr. James Nichols—Mr. Watson publishes the last Part of his Theological Institutes, and presents that Work to the Connection—The Conference of 1829—Tribute to the Memory of Thomas Thompson, Esq.—Mr. Watson's Removal to London—Address at the Ordination of Missionaries—Letter to the Rev. John Hannah—Report of the Missionary Society for the year 1829—Persecution in Jamaica, . . . 339

CHAPTER XXII

Mr. Watson publishes his "Conversations for the Young"—Annual Meeting of the Missionary Society in 1830—Mr. Watson's Speech—Letter to the Rev. Samuel Entwisle—Meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society—Resolutions of Con-

ference on Slavery—Letter to Dr. Emory—Address to the Congregation at City-Road on Slavery—Mr. Watson's Sermon on God with us—Missionary Report for 1830—Speech at the Anti-Slavery Meeting—Address to the Methodists on Slavery—Supplement to the Methodist Hymn Book—Mr. Watson publishes the Life of Mr. Wesley—Conference of 1831, ... Page 363

CHAPTER XXIII.

Appearance of the Cholera in England—Fast Day observed by the City-Road Congregation—Watch-Night at the City-Road—Letter to Mr. Edmondson—Report of the Missionary Society for 1831—Persecutions in Jamaica—Mr. Watson visits Brighton for his Health—Completion of his Biblical Dictionary—Doctrine of Christian Perfection—Missionary Anniversary in 1832—Mr. Watson's Speech—Literary Projects—Mr. Watson begins an Exposition of the New Testament—The Conference of 1832—Letter to Mrs. Watson—Mr. Watson presents his Works to the Methodist Connection—His Appointment to the Office of Resident Secretary to the Missions—Dr. Adam Clarke—Mr. Watson's resignation of his Pastorship at City-Road, ... 398

CHAPTER XXIV.

Letters to Mr. William Shaw—Circular Letter addressed to the Missionaries—Death of Dr. Adam Clarke—Death of the Rev. Thomas Stanley—Literary Project—Letter to Mr. Benjamin Blaine—Mr. Watson's last Sermon—Death of the Rev. John James—Mr. Watson's Exposition—Rapid Decline of Mr. Watson's Health—State of the Anti-Slavery Question—Letter to Mr. Buxton, on Negro Emancipation—Notices of Mr. Watson's last Sickness, by Mrs. Bulmer, Mr. Beecham, Mr. Marsden, Mr. Ince, Mr. Dixon, and Mrs. Dixon—His Death—Resolutions of the Missionary Committee—Mr. Watson's Funeral—Mr. Bunting's Sermon on his Death—Tribute to his Memory in the Missionary Report—His Character by the Conference—Publication of his Exposition, ... 419

CHAPTER XXV.

Mr. Watson's personal Appearance—Manners—Mental Character—Attainments—Judgment and Imagination—Fine Taste—Versatility of his Talents—Practical Habits—Uprightness and Consistency—Diligence—Pastoral Visitation—Kind Attention to Children—Temper—Effect of Disease upon his Spirits—Forgiving Temper—Generosity—Conduct in the Domestic Relations—Letter to his Son—Qualifications as Missionary Secretary—Usefulness in that Office—Catholic Spirit—Modesty—Powers of Conversation—Submission to the Authority of Scripture—Letter to a Speculatist—Character of his Preaching—Manner in the Pulpit—Examples of powerful Eloquence—Manner of conducting Public Worship—Attachment to his own Denomination—Conduct as a Methodist Preacher—Was not a theoretic Dissenter—Regard for the established Church—His deep Piety—Honour put upon him in Death, ... 462

MEMOIRS

OF

THE REV. RICHARD WATSON.

CHAPTER I.

Mr. Watson's Parentage—Birth—Delicate Health—Early Education—Religious Training—Death of a Sister—Fraternal Conduct—Removal to Lincoln—Education in that City—Proposal that he should enter the Army—Love of Reading—Apprenticed to a Joiner—Personal Appearance—Moral Character—Conversion—Fervent Piety—Singular Accidents.

Few subjects of inquiry excite deeper interest than the personal history of men who have been distinguished by learning, genius, or any peculiarities of character and conduct. The Church and the world, therefore, have each their favourite biographical works, in which their respective heroes are exhibited; and to these they are accustomed to pay a more than ordinary attention. To meet the public demand for some authentic record of one of the most eminent men of modern times, the following narrative has been prepared. It suggests many important lessons of practical instruction; and presents, in a very striking view, the power and excellence of true religion, as giving strength and elevation to the human intellect, sanctifying a life of affliction, inspiring universal charity, and affording consolation and hope in the prospect of death and eternity.

The Rev. Richard Watson was the son of Thomas and Ann Watson, and was born at Barton-upon-Humber, in Lincolnshire. His father, who was a native of Ledenham, near Lincoln, was the son of a respectable farmer; and as the family was somewhat large, and could not be all conveniently employed in agriculture, he was brought up to the business of a saddler. The earlier years of his life were spent in Nottingham; where it is probable he served his apprenticeship. In this town he was connected with the Methodists. He subsequently removed to Bawtry, and from thence to Barton.

Mrs. Watson, the mother of Richard, is still living, (1834,) and resides in Nottingham. She was born in London; but removed in early life with her parents to Finningley, near Bawtry, where she became acquainted with Mr. Watson, and was married to him in the parish church of that village. Though far advanced in years, she is in full possession of her faculties; and in her features greatly resembles her son. She presented her husband with eighteen children, of whom Richard was the seventh. They all died in their infancy, except Richard, and three sisters who are still living.

Richard was born February 22d, 1781. His father at that time was connected with the dissenters; yet, being a freeman of the city of Lincoln, and thinking that the parish register might be of advantage to his son in future life, the child was baptized at St. Peter's church, in Barton. During his infancy his health was exceedingly delicate;

his death was almost daily anticipated; he was taken to the church to be baptized on the fifth of March, being then only eleven days old; and his parents, who were passionately fond of him, had scarcely the slightest hope that he would be spared to arrive at manhood. He was so extremely weak, that his mother was for a long time compelled to nurse him upon a pillow; his feeble and attenuated frame not being able to bear the slight pressure of its own weight upon her arms.

When he was about three or four years old, so as to be able to walk, he became very lethargic. If his mother suffered him to leave the house for the purpose of play, a messenger generally arrived in a very short time, informing her that her son had reclined his head upon the threshold of some neighbouring house, and was there fast asleep. This drowsiness was only temporary, and was succeeded by unusual playfulness and vivacity. At a proper age he was placed under the tuition of an old lady who kept a school within a few doors of his father's house. The very earnest and vehement manner in which he repeated the letters, when learning the alphabet and beginning to form syllables, greatly interested his governess; who often exclaimed, "Bless thee! Thou wilt be a great man." The prediction has been amply verified; and the kindness and generosity under the impulse of which the prophetess thus oracularly spoke were honourable to her character; although the attainments of her pupil at that time could not be regarded as any proof of future eminence.

Having acquired the rudiments of instruction under the care and encouragement of his female teacher, Richard was sent to a school which was kept in a room adjoining St. Peter's church, by the curate, whose name was the Rev. Matthew Barnett, the clergyman by whom he had been baptized. He was then about six years of age; and during the first quarter of his admission, his intelligent tutor, seeing the capabilities of the boy, waited upon his parents, and proposed that he should immediately enter upon the study of Latin. With this suggestion they readily complied; although they had not previously contemplated, in the education of their son, any thing more than a bare preparation for some ordinary business. A higher Power, however, designed him for more important employment; and had it not been for that sound classical training which he received in early life, he would have been very inadequately qualified for those momentous services in the Church for which he was intended. The parties concerned in conducting his education, at this period of his life, were unconscious instruments in the hands of a wise and gracious Providence, which was preparing him for extensive and permanent usefulness in the world. He had great aptitude for the acquisition of learning; so that he could freely indulge himself in play, which, considering the peculiar delicacy of his constitution, was necessary to his health, and yet he was always ready to obey the call of his master, when the time arrived for repeating his lesson. His mother often reminded him of the length and difficulty of his classical tasks, and of the consequent necessity of application; and his general reply was, "I can say my lesson." Fearing that he did not pursue his studies with sufficient diligence, she inquired of Mr. Barnett respecting the proficiency of his pupil; who told her that she might lay aside all anxiety on that subject, inasmuch as the improvement of her son was to him perfectly satisfactory.

Richard remained under the efficient tuition of this clergyman about two years, when the family removed from Barton.

During his residence in this town, Mr. Watson, sen., was accustomed, when the tide served, to cross the Humber from Barton to Hull on the Sunday morning, to attend the preaching of the Rev. Mr. Lambert, an eminent dissenting minister in that town; and also that of the Rev. Joseph Milner, the ecclesiastical historian. In Mr. Milner's church he often heard Mr. Stillingfleet, of Hotham, and other evangelical clergymen of celebrity. On these occasions he was frequently accompanied by his son Richard, who thus early in life was trained to an attendance upon the public worship of almighty God, and enjoyed the means of Christian instruction; and that salutary impressions were then made upon his tender mind, he afterward gratefully acknowledged. His father's sentiments, at this period, appear to have been Calvinistic; and as he was anxious that his neighbours should enjoy such a ministry as that which he conscientiously preferred, and to which he attached so much importance, he united with some other persons, like minded with himself, in the erection of a small chapel at Barton, in which a minister belonging to the connection of the late countess of Huntingdon was invited to officiate. He lodged in the house of Mr. Watson during his stay in Barton; but as he did not succeed in raising either a congregation or a church, so as to obtain adequate support, he at length left the place, and the attempt to raise a dissenting interest was abandoned. The sale of the chapel became necessary; and Mr. Watson would not consent to this measure, unless his fellow trustees would dispose of it to the Methodists, that it might still be used as a place of religious worship. To this they agreed; and this humble structure is believed to have been the first Methodist chapel in Barton. By this attempt to introduce a dissenting ministry, Mr. Watson offended many of his customers, who therefore withdrew their patronage from him. His business, in consequence, declined; and he was ultimately induced to leave the town. He was an upright man; and among those who were personally acquainted with him in those times, he had the reputation of possessing considerable powers of memory; while his general intelligence, and especially his knowledge of divinity, raised him considerably above the greater part of his contemporaries of the same rank in society. The discipline which he maintained in his family was strict. His children were trained up in a regular attendance upon religious worship; were restrained from evil company, from Sabbath breaking, and from the use of profane songs; and regularly instructed in the Assembly's Catechism. His parental care and solicitude were not in vain. Though often called to follow his infant offspring to the grave, in one of them, at least, he was favoured with a signal display of the power of Divine grace. He had a daughter who was a very remarkable example of early piety. She was a year or two older than her brother Richard; and they were tenderly attached to each other. They were accustomed to sing hymns together; and when they were left in the dark, she often told him that they need not be afraid; for that good angels, who sing hymns to God continually, would always take care of them. She had strong presentiments of an early death; and frequently told the family that she should soon die, and go to heaven.

Once, when the shoemaker brought her a pair of new shoes, instead of being elated, as is usually the case in children of her age, she told him that he might take them back again; for that she should not live to wear them. Her anticipations of an early death were realized. She died of the small pox, when her brother Richard was about four years old; and he was thus deprived of his favourite companion.

In the meanwhile, his mental improvement kept pace with his age. When he was not more than six years old, he read, with intense interest, sixteen or eighteen volumes of the Universal History, relating to the European nations, which his father purchased for him in one of his visits to Hull. He was exceedingly desirous to obtain the remainder of that voluminous work; but in this he was disappointed. In those times he also practised himself in drawing, in which he took great delight, and manifested more than ordinary taste. When he wanted a fresh supply of brushes, or of colours, he generally made application to his mother, whom he found, as other children have also done in similar cases, somewhat more accessible on such subjects than the father. It was his practice to repeat his Latin grammar to his eldest sister who now survives him; till at length she became nearly as well acquainted with it as he himself was. At one time, being both confined to the house by indisposition, they committed nearly the whole of Fenelon's Telemachus to memory. His sister speaks of his fraternal spirit and conduct in those times, and in his subsequent life, in terms of delight and affection. If any misunderstanding ever took place between them, it was generally terminated by a repetition of two stanzas in Dr. Watts's hymns for children, with which their minds were familiar:—

"Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
For God hath made them so;
Let bears and lions growl and fight,
For 'tis their nature too.

But children, you should never let
Such angry passions rise;
Your little hands were never made
To tear each other's eyes."

When Richard was about eight years of age, the family removed from Barton to Lincoln, where his father carried on business for several years, in the parish of St. Mary. On their arrival in that city, Richard was sent to a private seminary, kept by a person of the name of Hescott, till his parents should be able to obtain for him admission into the free grammar school. Here his classical studies seem to have been in a great measure suspended; and his attention was directed to the mathematics, and to those branches of education which have a reference to commercial transactions. At this school he does not appear to have been distinguished either by his application or his proficiency. His hand writing was not good; and, indeed, he was never ambitious to excel in this most useful art. He made amends, however, in some degree, by the superiority of his reading. In this he was proposed as an example to the whole school; and it became a common remark among the boys, "Dick Watson will make a capital parson, he is so good a reader." To him, the most important arrangement connected with this period of his life was the course of catechetical instruction

which he attended, under the direction of the minister who officiated in Lady Huntingdon's chapel. The catechism which was used, and the sections of which he was required consecutively to commit to memory, was that of the Westminster assembly of divines; which, with the confession of faith drawn up by the same authorities, is well known to be the standard of doctrine in the Scottish Church. Both these formularies are decidedly Calvinistic on the question of predestination and its concomitants; but they are, otherwise, among the best summaries of Christian theology ever compiled. To young Watson it must have been a great advantage to be rendered familiar with this brief system of Divine truth; a part of which was explained to him and his fellow catechumens every Saturday afternoon, when they resorted to the chapel for that purpose. Though the effects of this course might not immediately appear, he doubtless derived from it great benefit, when he became serious, and especially when he was called to instruct others in the concerns of salvation. Religious training is an essential part of sound education; and no mode of accomplishing this object has been found so efficient as that of catechising; the duty of which ought most conscientiously to be discharged by all those persons on whom the care of children and youth devolves. To say nothing of parents, those ministers incur a fearful responsibility who publicly admit children into the Church by baptism, and afterward neglect to take them under their pastoral charge, and afford no direct assistance in bringing them up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Catechetical instruction, as an elementary process, is necessary to qualify young persons to derive due advantage from the ministry of the word; and as a means of bringing the ministers of Christ and the junior portion of their charge into regular intercourse, it is intimately connected with the spiritual interests of the rising race, the prosperity of the Church, the preservation of public morals, and the national welfare.

After remaining at the seminary of Mr. Hescott about two years, Richard Watson was removed to the grammar school at Lincoln, then conducted, it is believed, by the Rev. Mr. Outhwaite, assisted by the Rev. John Carter; the latter of whom was afterward, for a long series of years, the head master of that establishment. His application and proficiency were highly satisfactory, under the tuition of those gentlemen. He read Cesar, Virgil, Horace, and some of the orations and epistles of Cicero, with Homer and Xenophon. It was without any specific object, either in his own mind, or in that of his parents, that he was subjected to this course of grammatical study in early life; but to him it afterward proved to be of incalculable advantage. By this means a sobriety and discipline were given to his mind, when more directly turned to the various branches of knowledge; the literary treasures of Greece and Rome were placed within his reach; and he was prepared to enter upon the study of the Greek Testament, to avail himself of the theological writings of the ablest divines and commentators in Europe, to form an acquaintance with ecclesiastical antiquity, and to read the Hebrew Scriptures with far less difficulty than he would otherwise have experienced, had he not been acquainted with the general principles upon which language is constructed. These advantages he ultimately realized to a considerable extent.

While pursuing his studies at the grammar school, he gave indica-

tions of that generosity which afterward became one of his most distinguishing characteristics. Among his school fellows was a son of Colonel Broomhead. The youth was desirous to learn; but his ability was not equal to that of some of his associates; and Richard was accustomed to assist him in his difficulties. The kindness shown him made a deep impression upon his ingenuous mind; and he was anxious in some manner to repay the valuable assistance of his friend; and therefore proposed to Mr. and Mrs. Watson that their son should enter into the army; suggesting that the colonel would soon place him in a situation of honour and emolument. Young Broomhead was himself in a course of training for the profession of arms, regarding it as the most direct road to fame; and he was beyond measure disappointed and grieved when he found that the parents of his friend had thoughts concerning a military life very different from those which he cherished, and were therefore deaf to all his proposals and entreaties on this subject. When he arrived at a suitable age, he entered into the army, and was killed in the first engagement with the enemy. His friend Watson lived to acquire a fame which the sword and musket can never confer.

In connection with his classical studies, he cherished a taste for general literature and knowledge. His father purchased for him a history of England, in four folio volumes; most probably that of Rapin, with the continuation by Tindal. This work he read with avidity; and so fixed was his attention, that when he sat, as he frequently did, with one of these volumes on his knee, he appeared to suffer no interruption from the conversation and bustle of the family. Being deeply interested in the manners, wars, and adventures of former ages, and finding that the leisure which he could command during the day was insufficient to gratify his appetite for this kind of information, he requested permission to sit up all night for the perusal of his favourite work. This request, of course, was denied by his parents, for reasons which his limited experience rendered him unable to appreciate; and he was, in consequence, greatly disappointed. At last he thought of an expedient which was likely to secure his purpose. He concealed the iron bar which fastened the shutters of the shop; and when the night came, and this necessary article of security was wanting, affecting to sympathize with the family in the loss which they had sustained, and suggesting that it would be very unsafe to leave the property in the shop exposed to depredation, he recommended that the family should retire to sleep, and he would sit up all night, to prevent the intrusion of thieves. The fraud was not discovered till sometime afterward. This ingenious scheme shows his passion for reading, but is not to be commended.

On the removal of the family to Lincoln, Mr. Watson, sen., attended the chapel belonging to Lady Huntingdon's connection. He subsequently united himself to the Methodist society; and his family were accustomed to accompany him to the chapels of these communities; but it does not appear that his son gave any satisfactory indications of piety at this period of his life. He was ready at his studies, fond of play, full of animation, possessed a ready wit, and gave striking proofs of a strong and determined mind; but the solemn truths of religion engaged little of his attention, and did not seem deeply to impress his heart. As his parents had not the means of educating him

for a learned profession, when he arrived at the age of fourteen years, it was necessary that he should be taught some business, as a means of honourable subsistence. His father recommended that he should be a draper, or an ironmonger; but he chose rather to be a carpenter and joiner. The reason which he assigned for this preference was, that the life of a shopkeeper is comparatively idle; and he thought it much more manly and becoming to be engaged in an active and laborious employment. In a yard connected with his father's house was a shop, at which machines of various descriptions, and especially for the winnowing of corn, were manufactured; and it is probable that his intercourse with the workmen, whom he daily saw using the implements of their craft, suggested to him the business which he selected. According to his wishes, he was apprenticed for the term of seven years, to Mr. William Bescoby, whose workshop was not far distant from his father's house; and as his health was delicate, it was arranged that he should reside with his parents.

At this time his appearance was very singular. Though only fourteen years of age, he had attained his full stature, which was six feet two inches; his hair was lank, and of a deep black; his countenance was that of a mere boy, and his manners were unformed. His extraordinary height was the more remarkable, as both his parents were considerably below the middle stature.

After the commencement of his apprenticeship, his general spirit and conduct underwent a change for the worse. He became less studious and thoughtful, and cherished an unbounded passion for mischief. Within a few yards of his father's house there lived a Methodist shoemaker, in very humble circumstances; but he was distinguished by deep piety, and very active zeal. This poor man, who had once beaten Richard in the chapel for indecorous behaviour, became an object of almost constant jest with the thoughtless youth. A habit of treating religious persons with ridicule generally prepares the way for greater evils; and the contempt shown for the shoemaker was only the prelude to acts of direct hostility to the pious associates of that good man. The only road leading to the Methodist chapel in Lincoln lay by the side of the canal; and for many years the congregations, in passing and repassing, were exposed to the most grievous annoyance. Men and boys were accustomed, especially on the winter evenings, to congregate on the opposite side of the canal, and pelt them with offensive and even dangerous missiles. This practice was carried on, with various degrees of violence, for several years; and was only terminated by the just and spirited conduct of one of the judges, before whom it was found necessary to bring some of the worst delinquents for trial at the assizes. Richard was unhappily led, doubtless by his love of sport, rather than by direct and systematic hostility to religion, to connect himself with the persons who were concerned in these practices. Disregarding parental authority and example, he took his stand on the side of the canal opposite to that on which the chapel stood, and joined in pelting the worshippers of God with whom his father was associated in Christian fellowship. Sometimes he also went to the chapel, to disturb the congregation and the preacher during the time of Divine service. His father was grieved to witness such a destitution of pious feeling in one so young, and who had been reli-

giously educated; but the heart was hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and for a time remonstrance was unavailing. The misguided young man had no conception of happiness, except in levity and frolic, and in the company of persons of similar tastes and pursuits. Considering the manner in which he began, thus early in life, to neglect the house of God, profane the Sabbath, associate with evil company, and to ridicule sacred things, the anticipations of his friends respecting his future character and habits were very discouraging. Had it not been that he was arrested by an unseen hand, and made a remarkable instance of the freeness and power of Divine grace, his own opinion was, he would have become one of the most wicked among his comrades. Possessing extraordinary energy of mind, it was not in his nature to rest in mediocrity. He must be eminent either in good or evil; and now, having entered upon a downward course, the fearful probability was, that he would pursue it to his ruin.

With God, however, "judgment is a strange work." He hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner; and by a signal display of that mercy and power of which the history of the Church furnishes many examples, the thoughtless and ungodly youth, who had just entered upon a ruinous career, was effectually converted from the error of his way. The manner in which this change was wrought is worthy of special record. There lived in Lincoln, at that time, a watchmaker, who was no relation to Richard, though he bore the same name. He was a remarkably intelligent man; and to his house Richard was accustomed to resort, for the pleasure and benefit of his conversation, and especially for assistance in his mathematical studies, to which he continued to devote a portion of his time. The wife of this man was a professor of religion; but more remarkable for her loquacity, than the depth of her piety. She was an endless disputant on doctrinal topics; and especially on the five points at issue between the disciples of Calvin and those of Arminius; and when Richard came to the house for scientific purposes, she greatly annoyed him by lengthened speeches on questions which he did not understand, and in which he felt little interest. The family of the Watsons at that time had, in a great measure, forsaken the Calvinistic ministry, and attached themselves to the Methodist chapel; and this good woman seems to have been very desirous of convincing Richard how grievously they had mistaken their way, in preferring the Wesleyan theology to that of Calvin. His patience was severely tried by what he considered an impertinent occupation of his time; and his vanity was mortified when his female assailant pressed him with arguments which he knew not how to answer. For some time he had absented himself from the Methodist chapel; but at length he resolved to attend the preaching there for a few times, in the hope of hearing something that would enable him, as Bishop Horsley expresses it, "to grapple with the difficulties of the quinquarticular controversy," and to silence his triumphant antagonist. Such was the motive which induced him again to resort to the place where his father worshipped; and under the first sermon that he heard after his return, he learned, what he little suspected, that there were subjects of greater importance than those on which he had come to seek information, and that they demanded his first attention. The late Rev. George Sargent was the preacher. The word came with power to

the young man's heart, and he was deeply convinced of sin. He saw that he was guilty in the sight of God, and exposed to the tremendous curse of the Divine law; that his nature was totally corrupt, so as to render him unable either to serve God acceptably on earth, or to enjoy him in heaven. Life appeared as a dream; eternity, with all its realities, seemed to be just at hand; and he was in danger of perishing everlastingly. His sins, incalculable in their number, and attended by many aggravations, were brought to his remembrance. They had been committed against a kind and long-suffering God, in contempt of his compassionate Redeemer, and in the midst of evangelical light and instruction, which greatly enhanced their guilt. Fear succeeded to that hardihood which he had for some time maintained, and penitential sorrow to that levity which he had indulged. He thought no more of supplying himself with arguments on the subject of "fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute;" but of the way by which he might escape the wrath which was suspended over his head, and ready to break forth upon him. At the conclusion of the service he left the chapel, not to rush into company, but to retire into secret; not to engage in vain and wordy disputation; but to meditate and pray. The principal object to which his attention was now directed, was not the silencing of the eager controversialist who had puzzled him, but the removal of his guilt, by an application of the blood of Christ to his conscience. In this state of mind, "sorrowing after a godly sort," he was induced to accompany some religious people to a village, a few miles from Lincoln, to hear a sermon preached by the Rev. William Dodwell, vicar of Welby, near Grantham. Under the sermon of this clergyman, Richard's religious convictions were deepened; and his grief occasioned by the remembrance of his rebellion against God was rendered more poignant and severe. The secrets of his heart were laid open; and the evils of his nature were presented to his view in a new and fearful light. He was alarmed for the consequences of his wickedness; weary and heavy laden under the yoke and burden of sin; and he could only pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner." His state he perceived to be one of equal peril and wretchedness.

Happily for him, he was surrounded by men who had passed through the same painful process to the joys of pardon and purity of heart. They had individually felt the anguish of a wounded spirit; and knew how to sympathize with their weeping friend, who now preferred walking with them in company to the house of God, and being hooted by the mob, to the society of scoffers, and the noisy hilarity of foolish men. His religious friends had obtained the salvation of the Gospel; and well knowing the nature of that inward kingdom, for which his poverty of spirit was designed to prepare him; and the richness of that comfort which is promised to them that mourn as he did; while they rejoiced to see the prodigal return, they directed his attention to the perfect sacrifice of Christ, and encouraged him to believe with the heart unto righteousness in his crucified Redeemer. From early life he had been accustomed to hear the doctrine of justification by faith stated and enforced; but he never before saw its adaptation to his state and character. The doctrine of atonement for sin came to his heart with a freshness and power which he had never previously experienced; his understanding approved of the evangelical method of a sinner's

justification before God, through faith in the blood of Christ; and believing that Christ died as a sacrifice for the sins of men,—that Christ died as a sacrifice for *his* sins,—he put his trust in Christ for pardon, for a title to eternal life, and for that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." It was done unto him according to his faith. His midnight was turned into the light of day; guilty fear in his breast gave place to filial love; the Holy Ghost bore a distinct and indubitable witness with his spirit that he was a child of God; he loved God under a deep and impressive assurance of God's love to him; and he loved all mankind for the Lord's sake.

It has been justly observed by a modern writer, that a change like this can never be forgotten; that a man might as well attempt to forget a hairbreadth escape from shipwreck, or from his house at midnight when he suddenly found himself enveloped in smoke and flame, as forget the period when, in the Scriptural sense of the expression, he "passed from death unto life." The subject of this account retained to the end of his days a vivid recollection of the feelings and occurrences connected with this period of his moral history. In familiar intercourse with his friends he often referred to the callous state of his heart before his conversion, and the spiritual enjoyments which succeeded that happy event. After a lapse of nearly thirty years he visited the place of his spiritual birth; and amidst the delightful services of a missionary anniversary, a love-feast was held for the members of the Methodist society in Lincoln and its neighbourhood, at which he was present. With deep emotion, the tears gushing from his eyes, he related the particulars of his early life; especially his wickedness in connecting himself with the persecutors of God's people; the penitent distress which he experienced when convinced of sin; and the state of light and liberty into which he was brought when "the God of hope filled him with all joy and peace in believing," and he was enabled to "abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." During his last illness, when death appeared in full view before him, he said to a friend with strong feeling, "What a light was that! what a day, when the blessed Spirit first struck the light of heaven into our dark minds."

The principles which this truly great man recognized in conversion, he cherished through the labours and afflictions of life. He regarded the sacrifice and intercession of Christ as the only ground of a sinner's justification before God; and faith in the blood of atonement as inseparably connected with salvation from the guilt and power of sin. The Holy Spirit he honoured as the author of saving faith, and of all holiness, power, and comfort in the mind of man. The salvation of the Gospel, consisting of these blessings, and obtained in this manner, he felt to be the great end of existence; necessary to prepare mankind both for the duties and trials of life, and the joys of heaven. An enlarged acquaintance with theology, the Scriptures, religious people, and the history of the Church, only served to strengthen his attachment to these principles; and he realized their truth and efficiency when passing through "the valley of the shadow of death."

The effects of regenerating grace were perhaps never more strikingly manifest than in the spirit and conduct of this extraordinary youth. Not many days had elapsed after he was convinced of sin, before he was made a happy partaker of the pardoning mercy of God. In

him "old things were passed away, and all things become new." His attention to secular duties was most sedulous and exemplary; and his proficiency in the practical knowledge of his business was rapid and surprising. All unnecessary connection with his ungodly companions was immediately and for ever abandoned. He became a willing and happy member of the Methodist society; and meekly submitted to all the contumely and insult with which they were then treated in that city. His passion for folly and mischief was entirely subdued; and his spirit, sanctified by Divine grace, and under the full influence of evangelical truth, was serious, cheerful, and devout. Notwithstanding his youth, his entire deportment was marked by such circumspection and decorum, that religious parents were accustomed to direct the attention of their children to him as an example; and in some instances, young people were so struck with the change which they saw in him, as to be deeply impressed with the reality and power of religion. His conversion, as might be expected, excited considerable attention among the persecutors of the Methodists, who were roused to more determined opposition and outrage; and the congregations were subjected to every species of annoyance, both in the chapel, and on their way to it. One evening, a number of men, dressed in a most ludicrous and fantastic manner, came to the chapel with a fiddle to disturb the worshippers of God. This impious adventure, had it occurred a few months before, would have been exactly adapted to his taste; but now he viewed it in a very different light. On his return home he related to his mother what had occurred; at the same time weeping, because of the dishonour done to God by the profane interruption of his worship, and the folly and wickedness of the men who were thus criminally indifferent to every obligation of decency and religion.

After his conversion, the improvement of his time became with him a matter of supreme importance; and "no moment lingered unemployed." The day was cheerfully spent in the labours of his calling; and his evenings were devoted to the acquisition of useful knowledge, and attendance upon the worship of God. His mother states, that he spent much time in secret prayer, wrestling with God for spiritual blessings, and for the prosperity and enlargement of the kingdom of Christ. Public prayer meetings were frequently held; and he was constantly present in these means of grace. His heart expanded with the love of Christ; his peace often flowed like a river; he longed for the salvation of others in the bowels of his Lord; and under the impulse of these hallowed feelings he sometimes took a part in the public addresses to the throne of the heavenly grace. This provoked, in a high degree, the ridicule of his former companions; yet his self possession appears never to have forsaken him; nor was he at all hindered in his Christian course. He steadily held on his way; and neither the scoffs of the ungodly, nor the more dangerous suggestions of those who thought him "righteous overmuch," moved him from his purpose to serve God, and him alone. He resolved, in reliance upon the promised aids of Divine grace, to be a Christian altogether.

The prayer meetings in the chapel often began about the time when his labours in the shop were ended: considerable haste, therefore, was requisite, that he might be at the house of God when the service commenced; and it is a remarkable fact, that, at two different times,

when running to the chapel, in his eagerness to join his Christian friends in Divine worship, he fell, and broke his arm. This was probably occasioned, in part, at least, by the rapidity of his growth, and the enormous stature to which he had so suddenly attained. In these instances the ardour of his mind received a temporary check; and, instead of pursuing his way to the "place where prayer was wont to be made," he returned home pensive and sad, holding the fractured limb in his hand, and relating to his parents the disaster which had befallen him.

CHAPTER II.

Developement of Mr. Watson's mental Character—Death of his Grandmother—Beginning of his Ministry—State of the Villages near Lincoln—Labours as a Local Preacher—Opposition—Visit to Newark—Freedom from his Apprenticeship—Labours in the Newark Circuit—Appointed to the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Circuit—Character and Usefulness—Thirst for Knowledge—Desultory Nature of his Studies—Removal to the Castle-Donington Circuit—Henry's Method for Prayer—Winchesterianism.

Those persons who had carefully observed the progress of Richard Watson from his infancy must have been aware that his mental powers, though as yet very imperfectly developed, were above the common order. The readiness with which he acquired the elements of classical learning at Barton, and the rapid advancement which he made in the same studies in the grammar school at Lincoln, showed something of his capabilities; and the eagerness with which he encountered the voluminous History of England, and even that of Europe, seemed to give an earnest of future application, and of the eminence to which he might arrive in the various departments of knowledge. But it was not till after his conversion that his true intellectual character appeared. Up to that period his mental faculties had never been fully called forth. This complete change in "the inner man," gave an intensity to his feelings unknown before, and directed his attention to the sublimest and most important topics that ever occupied the thoughts of either men or angels. The perfections of the Godhead, the redemption of the world by the death of the incarnate Son of God, the guilt and misery of fallen man, the necessity of repentance, faith in the blood of atonement, the salvation of the Gospel, the pleasures of religion, triumph in death, the resurrection of the entire human race, the general judgment, the joys of heaven, the endless miseries of hell; these and many collateral subjects roused his feelings, and stimulated all the energies of his imagination and understanding. His talents for usefulness soon became apparent. The moral state of the surrounding country was eminently calculated to awaken his sympathies, while it called for the most strenuous exertions; and with the full approbation of his religious friends, who saw that his piety was deep, and the growth of his mental stature as rapid as had been that of his corporeal frame, he soon began to deliver exhortations in the prayer meetings, and to officiate as a local preacher. The employment of persons so young in the public service of the Church requires great caution. There is a danger lest their personal religion should be injured by

vanity and spiritual pride, while as yet their knowledge of themselves and of Satan's devices is very imperfect; and there is an equal danger lest they should injure the sacred cause of true religion by advancing crude and undigested views of Divine truth, and erroneous interpretations of Scripture. The case of this remarkable youth, however, was peculiar. In ordinary instances such juvenile ministrations are seriously to be deprecated; but he possessed a strength and sobriety of judgment, of which, at such a period of life, there have been few examples; while the depth and solidity of his piety would have done honour to hoary years; and the cordiality with which he was received by the most pious and intelligent of his hearers, and the success which attended his labours, proved that he had not mistaken his calling. He was a man in understanding, when people in general are mere children.

The manner in which he was led to speak in public was very striking. His maternal grandmother lived in the family of his father. She was upward of eighty years of age, and appears to have been a woman of a very devout spirit. It was her practice regularly to attend the religious services of her parish Church on the Sabbath; and almost every day in the week beside she was present at the worship of God in the cathedral; although that edifice was nearly a mile from her home, and was situated on the summit of a steep and lofty hill, which it was necessary for her to ascend. She was not a member of the Methodist society, but was a frequent attendant at the chapel, where she joined in the service of God, and listened to "the word of his grace." To this venerable relation, who, like another Anna, "was of a great age," and "departed not from the temple, but served God with prayers night and day," the pious youth was tenderly attached. One day, when he was at work in the shop, she said to her granddaughter, the present Mrs. Robinson, of Nottingham, "Ann, my dear, get the prayer book, and read to me the whole of the burial service. I should like to hear it." Her request was complied with, notwithstanding its singularity. She then said, "I very much wish to see Richard. Will any of you ask him to come home?" Her message was conveyed to him; but the answer was, that he could not be spared from his work. He added, however, that he would see his grandmother in the evening when his work was done. In the meanwhile she said to her daughter, "I am very sleepy." "I will fetch you a pillow, mother," was the reply; "and you shall lean your head upon the table, while you sit in your chair." The pillow was brought; she reclined her head upon it, closed her eyes, and instantly expired, without the slightest indication of pain. When Richard returned home, and found that his grandmother was no more, and that she had departed this life in this calm and peculiar manner, he was greatly affected. A prayer meeting was held in the chapel that evening; he, according to his custom, resorted to that means of grace; and, under the strong impulse of the feelings thus excited, he delivered an address to the persons then assembled, on the solemn event which had just occurred in his father's house; adverting to the lessons of piety and diligence it was calculated to teach. This appears to have been the commencement of his public ministry; the future character of which neither he nor his humble auditors at that time anticipated. The remains of his venerable grandmother were interred in the church yard of St. Mary's; and the following inscription

is still legible upon her grave stone: "In Memory of Sarah Weeden, who departed this life February 10th, 1796, aged eighty-one years. Also, William, son of Thomas and Ann Watson, who died an infant, April 9th, 1792." As Richard was born February 22d, 1781; it appears that he was scarcely fifteen years old when he began to call sinners to repentance: an instance of precocity almost unexampled.

Having begun to declare "the truth as it is in Jesus," he was impelled onward by a conviction of duty, and an intense zeal for the spiritual good of mankind; and on the 23d of February, the day after he was fifteen years of age, he preached his first sermon, in a cottage, at a small village called Boothby, a few miles from Lincoln. He saw the vanity of the world, and its utter insufficiency to confer the happiness to which the deathless soul of man aspires; he saw, in an impressive light, the evil and danger of sin, and the necessity of salvation from it; he was himself happy in the enjoyment of the Divine favour, and it was his ardent and restless desire that all the world might share with him in the blessings of the Saviour's love. The moral state of the villages in the neighbourhood of Lincoln was deeply to be deplored. There was among the people a general indifference even to the forms of religion, and a lamentable ignorance of its spirituality and power; and at the same time, they were strenuously opposed to all attempts to instruct and reform them, because such attempts they felt to be a direct reflection both upon them and their forefathers. This state of things called for tender compassion, and required more than ordinary firmness and perseverance. The men who were to bring about a new state of things needed a courage which no personal danger could daunt, and a patience and self possession which no provocations and insults could move. These qualifications were found in Richard Watson, young as he then was in years, and younger still as he was in true religion. Not many months had elapsed since he was a companion of ungodly men; but now his views and feelings were so changed, that life itself was of small value in his estimation, when placed in competition with the Christian instruction and consequent salvation of the people. The harvest was at once plenteous and difficult, and the labourers were few and unpromising. In what is now the Lincoln circuit, there were then only about six local preachers; and there was no chapel in which to officiate but that in the city. They had no regular plan of operation; but each man went to the places where he found an opening, or where he thought his labours were the most needed. The entire circuit comprehended what are now the circuits of Lincoln, Gainsborough, and Sleaford; and these distant places were regularly visited by the itinerant preachers; but the labours of the local preachers, being generally confined to the Sabbath, were of course circumscribed within much narrower limits. In this work our youthful evangelist took his part. There were no dwelling houses open to him in which he could be accommodated for the delivery of his message in several of the villages which he felt it his duty to visit; the erection of chapels was out of the question; and he was accustomed, therefore, accompanied by one or two friends of a kindred spirit, to stand up in the open air, and, after the example of his Lord, inculcate the leading truths of Christianity. The principal scene of his early labours lay in what is called the Cliff Row; a number of agricultural villages situated on a range of

hills a few miles south of Lincoln, and running nearly parallel with the road between Lincoln and Grantham. The treatment which he frequently met with was rude and offensive; and his mother states, that when he returned home in the evenings, his clothes often bore sad marks of the violence with which he had been assailed by lawless men. The Methodist shoemaker of whom he had been accustomed to make sport, was generally his faithful associate and companion in these evangelical labours. He used to encourage his young friend in his arduous work, stand by him in the midst of mobs, and endeavour to guard him against injury and interruption. The spiritual and moral good effected by the blessing of God upon the disinterested labours of Richard Watson and his coadjutors, in a comparatively short space of time, was incalculable, as the writer of this account can testify from personal knowledge. For many years the shoemaker here referred to was a very zealous and useful member of the Methodist society in Lincoln, and afforded valuable assistance in extending the work of God in the neighbourhood; but his latter end, unhappily, was not worthy of his previous life. Surrounded by a large family, he extended his business beyond his pecuniary means, and involved himself in difficulties, under the pressure of which his moral principles were overcome; and his sun set behind a cloud. His name is therefore withheld; and his case is recorded as a warning to others. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

Mr. Watson and his brethren met with opposition more formidable than that which was raised by mobs. Their fears were strongly excited by men who threatened to put obsolete and persecuting laws in force against them. Among the persons who adopted this mode of intimidation was an aged and intemperate clergyman in the neighbourhood of Lincoln, who greatly frightened them by his menaces. They deemed it necessary, therefore, to take the oaths prescribed by the act of toleration, and claim the legal protection to which they were entitled as British subjects. Richard applied to the bench of magistrates at the quarter sessions in Lincoln, requesting that the oaths might be administered to him, and that he might receive a license to preach.—With this request they refused to comply; the worshipful the mayor, who appears to have acted as chairman, assigning, as the ground of the refusal, that as the applicant was an apprentice, his time was not his own. A wise and tolerant reason, truly! Because his time during the week days belonged to his master, if he should dare on the Sabbath, when his master made no claim upon his services, to follow the convictions of his own mind in calling sinners to repentance, he should be subjected to pains and penalties, under the operation of iniquitous acts of parliament passed in the reign of the Stuarts! Such was the justice then awarded to the Methodists by the civic authorities of Lincoln. In consequence of this disappointment Mr. Watson repaired to the quarter sessions at Newark, accompanied by one of his brethren, where they met with a more favourable reception; and being duly licensed, they were placed under the guardianship of the law in their public ministrations. They were therefore at liberty to persevere in the course of useful and honourable toil, to which they believed themselves providentially called, without fear of legal molestation, and to the grief and mortification of the men who wished to harass and annoy them.

It was impossible that a person so young, so deeply pious, and so gifted, should continue to preach without exciting general attention.—He sometimes occupied the pulpit of the Methodist chapel in Lincoln, to the astonishment of the congregation, and especially of those who were acquainted with his former levity and folly. Those of his hearers who were possessed of spiritual discernment saw in his hallowed seriousness and fervour, his distinct and forcible elocution, and his manly sense, the elements of the ministerial character; and they glorified God in him. In his conversion and endowments they also recognized the fulfilment of the sacred word, which declares that God shall "ordain strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings;" and they silently adored that blessed Spirit who can enrich with wisdom, knowledge, and utterance, and who "giveth to every man severally as he will." Reports concerning the character and success of his preaching spread into districts where he was personally unknown; and many were induced to say, "I would hear the young man myself." Among other places, he was requested to visit Newark, and to preach in the Methodist chapel. With this request he complied; but when he ascended the pulpit, his boyish aspect excited painful alarm in many who had come to hear, and who could scarcely believe that it was possible for one so young to preach extempore. Their alarm was increased when he read for his text, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," John iv, 24, thinking that the words presented difficulties which he was not prepared to encounter. As he proceeded in his discourse, however, and they heard from his lips some of the most important verities of the Christian revelation, delivered with a gravity, and with a correctness both of sentiment and expression, that would have done honour to an aged divine, their apprehensions on his account entirely subsided, and they listened to his message with mingled feelings of admiration and delight. This visit to Newark led to the most important results. It was a link in that golden chain of Providence, by which he was ultimately drawn from all secular pursuits, and "separated to the Gospel of God."

To those intelligent Christians who had observed even Mr. Watson's first attempts at preaching, it must have been manifest that he was providentially designed for the work of the ministry. The business in which he was employed as a mechanic afforded no adequate scope for the exercise of his mental powers; and his mind was perpetually occupied in the study of the Scriptures, in the preparation of sermons, and in plans of usefulness to the neglected souls of men. His attention was drawn to these subjects by an influence which he knew not how to resist; and in preaching the doctrines of the cross, the truth and power of which he himself had realized, he found the richest joy and satisfaction. Formidable difficulties, however, appeared to beset his path. About five years of his apprenticeship yet remained; and if he should employ the whole of this time in manual labour, the cultivation of his mind must continue in a great degree neglected; and his means of usefulness in future life be proportionably diminished. Under these circumstances he meekly pursued his course of duty, leaving himself entirely in the hands of God, and taking no anxious thought for the morrow. His heart was the seat of holy peace and love; he had no object in view but the glory of his Divine Lord; and at length

his way was made plain before him, in a manner which he could never have anticipated. His master was not wealthy, nor did he make a strict profession of religion. The services of his apprentice had become very valuable; and were likely to be so, in an increasing degree, through a series of years. Yet he saw that his gain would be the permanent loss of the young man; and, with a generosity which reflects the highest honour upon his memory, he delivered up the indenture by which Richard Watson was bound to him; saying to the father of this interesting youth, "Your son has learned every thing that I am able to teach him; and his abilities are such, that he is capable of providing for himself far better than he will be if he continue with me to the end of his apprenticeship. I understand he has an uncle in London, who carries on an extensive and lucrative business as a cabinet maker; and I advise you to send him thither, where he will have an opportunity of exercising his ingenuity, and of turning it to a good account." Richard was thus at liberty to act as God in his providence might direct. On the part of Mr. Bescoby, the liberation of his apprentice was a perfectly voluntary act; and he seems to have had no object in view but the secular advantage of the youth, whose character he admired, and in whose welfare he cherished a friendly concern.

When Mr. Watson had, in this honourable manner, obtained his liberty, his father proposed to him that he should repair to London, for the purpose which his late master had suggested; but in reply to this Richard said he did not think that he should long confine his attention to business of any kind. His mind was strongly drawn to preaching; and he believed himself to be called of God to the Christian ministry. "If that be the case," rejoined the father, "it is useless to expend any more time and money in acquiring a knowledge of any trade."

At this juncture the Rev. Thomas Cooper, then stationed in the Newark circuit, lost his health; and it was found necessary to engage some person to supply his lack of ministerial service. Mr. Watson had preached in Newark with acceptance a little while before; and in this emergency the attention of the people in that town was immediately directed to him. He was accordingly requested to take Mr. Cooper's work for a time; and as he was disengaged, and had a strong predilection for the ministry, he complied, and repaired to Newark in the spring of 1796. Some of his friends in Lincoln, especially among the local preachers, disapproved of this arrangement. They had no doubts respecting his piety, or the competency of his abilities; but they thought his experience too limited to justify him in undertaking the labour of a travelling preacher.

On his arrival in Newark Mr. Watson went to the house of Mr. Cooper, where he was very kindly received. He had not been long there before he became greatly affected with his situation. He had just left his kind parents, for the first time; he was separated from his religious companions and associates; surrounded by strangers; about to enter upon a work of great difficulty, and of fearful responsibility; and he felt that his abilities were inadequate to the task which was laid upon him. Under the impression of these views the tears began to glisten in his eyes; he sighed deeply; and at length, overcome by his feelings, he wept like a child. Mr. Cooper, who knew the heart of a young preacher, and a stranger, sympathized with his sorrowing friend.

He took him up into his study, apart from all company; conversed with him at considerable length; encouraged him in the most feeling manner; and united with him in earnest prayer that the Lord would assist him, and bless him in his work. It was finally arranged that he should board and lodge in the house of Mr. Eggleston, an experienced Christian, and a man of leading influence in the society. This excellent man has been dead several years; but his son, and other branches of the family, remain; and from them we learn, that such was the piety, the good sense, the propriety, with which their inmate conducted himself when under their roof, that to this day they cordially cherish his memory, and always speak of him in terms of the highest respect. In a letter addressed to the author of this narrative Mr. Eggleston, jun., says, "His kind, affectionate, and pious deportment highly endeared him to my late parents, and the other members of the family; and his preaching was marked by a gravity above his years. There was also in his sermons an exhibition of mind, and a self command and regularity, very unusual in young preachers. The general remark among those who heard him was, 'He preaches like one who has been many years in the work!'"

Mr. Watson entered upon his itinerant labours in the Newark circuit with fear and trembling; and it was a considerable disadvantage to him that he was sent in the place of Mr. Cooper, whose talents as a preacher were of a very popular kind. When he went to one village in the circuit, the family by whom he was entertained had not the magnanimity to suppress their feelings of disappointment and mortification at the unpromising appearance of Mr. Cooper's substitute. They had expected their favourite preacher; and when they found that his place was to be supplied by a stranger, of very boyish mien, whom they had never previously seen, they uttered in his presence the most unseemly complaints, and in a manner calculated to make a very painful impression upon his mind. He listened, with perfect silence, to all their expressions of regret; and when the time arrived for the commencement of the service, he rose, and with becoming seriousness called upon the congregation to unite with him in singing the hymn beginning,—

"How happy is the pilgrim's lot,
How free from every anxious thought,
From worldly hope and fear!
Confined to neither court nor cell,
His soul disdains on earth to dwell;
He only sojourns here."

The entire service was conducted with such decorum and impressiveness, and such a heavenly influence attended the sermon, that the congregation were deeply affected; and the persons who had formed an estimate of his abilities from his youthful appearance, finding that they had judged erroneously, expressed concern for the unkindness of their remarks, and joined with the rest in earnestly requesting him to visit them again, even in the place of Mr. Cooper.

After his removal from home his parents, of course, were very anxious to know in what manner he was received in the different places, and how he succeeded in his preaching; and in answer to their inquiries, Mr. Eggleston informed them by letter, that the ministry of their son gave great and general satisfaction; for, had he been employed in the

ministry many years, his sermons could hardly have been more edifying and instructive.

Mr. Watson remained in the Newark circuit, as Mr. Cooper's assistant, till the conference of 1796; but he had no expectation that he should then be received into the regular itinerancy, for he was only sixteen years and six months old. He was ready to obey the call of Providence, either by labouring in the word and doctrine, or returning to his secular employ. In supposing, however, that he should not be immediately put into the ministry he was mistaken. A person so young, indeed, does not appear ever to have been previously employed as a travelling preacher; but it is said Mr. Cooper recommended him so strongly to the conference, as a person of more than ordinary piety and talent, that he was received upon trial; and at Mr. Cooper's urgent solicitation, he was appointed with him to the Ashby-de-la-Zouch circuit: yet, in consequence of his youth, his name was not inserted in the printed minutes; nor is any mention made of him in the conference journal, under the date of that year. Before he left Newark the Rev. Jonathan Edmondson preached in that town, on his way from the London conference to the Colne circuit. He gives the following account of Mr. Watson at that time:—"The moment I fixed my eyes upon him in the congregation, I was struck with his singular appearance. He was very tall and thin; his look was serious, but dignified; and his countenance indicated great intellectual power. When I left the pulpit, and inquired who he was, the friends told me that he was a youth of sixteen, who was employed in the circuit, to assist the travelling preachers."

Mr. Watson repaired to his new appointment; and here he co-operated with his colleagues, Messrs. Cooper and Burdsall, in the most faithful and affectionate manner, for the furtherance of the work of God. Their field of labour was very extensive, including what are now the circuits of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Burton-upon-Trent, and Uttoxeter. According to the testimony of his friends, who were acquainted with him at this period, his entire spirit and conduct proved him to be a man of God; and the talent which he displayed in his ministry excited general surprise. Mr. Robert Stenson, a respectable local preacher, now resident in Nottingham, lived at that time in the Ashby-de-la-Zouch circuit, and was very intimate with Mr. Watson, having accompanied him in his visits to the villages in the neighbourhood of Burton. From him the following particulars have been received:—

"Soon after Mr. Watson came into the circuit, I went with him to a village where the Methodist ministry had but recently been commenced, and heard him preach on Heb. iii, 2, 3. He introduced his discourse in a very luminous and interesting manner, and with the seriousness of an aged divine. But when he entered upon the discussion of his subject, I was truly astonished. From that day to the present I do not believe that I have ever heard the salvation of the Gospel, in its fulness and spirituality, more clearly set forth, or more impressively urged upon the acceptance of perishing sinners, than it was by him on that occasion. During his stay in the circuit, his piety, zeal, and talents bore him up in the esteem and affections of the people; and although his colleagues were both of them men of superior abilities as preachers, and had greatly the advantage over him in

experience, yet Mr. Watson commanded equal congregations with them.

"I remember to have met him one Sunday at Brislington, where he had begun a series of discourses on the Lord's prayer, in the delivery of which he gave great satisfaction to his hearers. In one of those discourses, when he was proceeding with considerable fluency and enlargement, in a moment he lost all recollection of the subject, and was compelled to conclude the service. Under this peculiar embarrassment, his composure, humility, and submission were very apparent; and these indications of piety made a deep impression upon the congregation. The effect was very striking; and the spiritual good which was done rendered it a time to be remembered. Mr. Watson preached on the evening of that day at Burton. He commenced the service with more than ordinary solemnity, fully sensible of his dependence upon Divine aid; the congregation was very large; and he delivered his message with his usual ability and self possession, and to good effect. At this period his zeal was intense; his soul, like that of the apostle, seemed always to 'travail in birth' for the conversion of sinners; and his ministry was admirably adapted to be useful. In the pulpit he was deeply serious. His public addresses to the throne of grace were characterized by great fervour; and his preaching was lucid and powerful. He was careful to discriminate, in almost all his discourses, between the open violater of the law of God, the self-righteous Pharisee, the formal professor of religion, the mourning penitent, the backsliding Christian, and the upright and conscientious believer; and he gave to every one his portion of meat in due season. The matter of his sermons was solid and important; and they were remarkable for clearness, fulness, and precision. He was bold as a lion in the cause of Christ, without any appearance of forwardness and self confidence. In preaching he was very faithful, energetic, pointed, and successful. During the first six or seven months he laboured very hard, even beyond his strength; and was instrumental in the conversion of many souls to God. A blessed revival of religion took place in Ashby, Griffydam, Burton, Repton, and some other places, toward which his services, in conjunction with those of his fellow labourers, were greatly conducive. His earnest exertions, both in prayer and preaching, were more than his feeble constitution could bear. His health, therefore, failed; and he was obliged to return home, and rest for some months, in order to the recovery of his strength. This loss of his labours was greatly lamented by the congregations; for he was generally beloved by the people. In his intercourse with his friends and the societies, he was more like a man of forty years of age, than a youth of sixteen; exhibiting an admirable mixture of Christian cheerfulness, sobriety, and seriousness. His habits were sociable and friendly, and his company very agreeable. At the same time he was deeply studious, and his thirst for useful knowledge was unbounded. I knew him well from the time that he was sixteen years of age till he was twenty; and in regard to that period of his life, among persons of the same age, I have not found his equal for piety, moral worth, and efficient preaching. In the course of forty years' experience and observation, and intercourse with the Church, I have never met with any young man who, in these respects, could, in my estimation, bear a comparison with Richard Watson."

With this testimony, that of Mr. Burdsall is in full accordance. Referring to the year which he and Mr. Watson spent together in the Ashby-de-la-Zouch circuit, he says, "At that early age he exhibited such ardour in the pursuit of knowledge of every sort, as exposed him to the danger of becoming desultory in reading and study; and he was only preserved from this by the quickness of his apprehension, and the tenacity of his memory. He was eager to know, and had a mind capable of acquiring knowledge in the most rapid manner. His father supplied him with money for the purchase of books; so that, as far as he had judgment to guide him in the selection, he had the means of improvement at his command. His circuit, indeed, was extensive; so that his studies were greatly interrupted; nor did his superintendent, though very fond of him on account of his superior intellect and fine spirit, take any pains to forward and direct his attempts at mental cultivation. In consequence of these disadvantages he fell into some indiscretions, both in the nature and mode of his studies; but these were afterward corrected by his growing experience. It has been stated, that he never preached twice from the same text, even in those early days; but this, like many other things which have appeared in print since his lamented decease, is a fabrication, neither according with his principles nor his practice. The fertility of his invention, and the vividness of his imagination, indeed, gave him a greater diversity of subjects than a person so young as he was could otherwise have commanded; and the precocity of his understanding gave considerable solidity and interest to his pulpit labours. He was naturally cheerful and buoyant, but not trifling; and his general seriousness rendered him acceptable and useful to all. Such was Richard Watson when we travelled together at Ashby."

When Mr. Cooper pressed the conference to receive Mr. Watson as an itinerant preacher, and requested that they might be stationed together, he incurred a responsibility, the full extent of which he does not appear to have appreciated. There are some ministers, in all religious communities, who obtain a sort of elementary acquaintance with the various branches of knowledge, and who do not seem to have either an inclination or a capacity for farther attainments. To them a right course of study is a matter of minor importance. They become familiar with the first principles of religion; and these they inculcate with fidelity, acceptance, and success; accompanying their public ministrations with pastoral visitation, and recommending practical Christianity by a holy and upright life. Such ministers fill a very important station in the Church; and are often largely instrumental in the conversion of men to God, and in the edification of believers. But Richard Watson was manifestly not a man of this class. As a Christian minister he was ready to engage with alacrity in every duty of his office, and was thoroughly imbued with its spirit; but, at the same time, his mind was inquisitive, penetrating, quick of perception, and untiring in its activity. It was evident that he would not be satisfied with a superficial knowledge of any subject that might come under his investigation; and the whole world of thought and speculation lay before him, and invited his attention. History and philosophy, in their various branches; the principal controversies on which the Christian sects are divided; the evidences of revelation; the facts, prophecies, criticism,

doctrines, and interpretation of the Scriptures, were all likely to come under his review, and to undergo his strict scrutiny. To him, therefore, it was a matter of the greatest moment, that his studies should be prosecuted with regularity; and especially that he should thoroughly understand the principles upon which all theological investigations ought to be conducted. Like the greater part of his brethren, he had been thrust into the ministry without much of that scholastic training which is so desirable and advantageous; and hence a judicious superintendence of his course of self tuition, considering the peculiarities of his character, was necessary at least to prevent the waste of time and labour. With this superintendence, unhappily, he was not favoured. Mr. Birdsall, though somewhat his senior, was, like him, only in the first year of his itinerancy. Mr. Cooper loved and admired him; but gave him no effectual assistance in the pursuit of knowledge. He neither taught him how to render his classical learning available in reference to the ministry, nor suggested to him what books he might read with the greatest advantage. That he was preserved from doctrinal error, with a mind so constituted, and left entirely to itself at this early period, is doubtless to be attributed, under the blessing of God, to his personal piety; and the practical mistakes into which he fell in regard to the nature and method of his studies, his own good sense enabled him subsequently to rectify; but to the end of his life he lamented the time which he lost in his youth, by a desultory mode of reading and study; and he therefore felt particularly concerned for such young preachers as are placed in circumstances similar to his own. Next to the reading of the Greek Testament, and of Mr. Wesley's sermons, a careful perusal of Bishop Pearson's "Exposition of the Apostles' Creed" would have been to him one of the most useful exercises. The profound, original, and orthodox views of revealed truth, which that incomparable work contains, would have served to settle his mind, and fix his theological principles; the perfect simplicity and rugged terseness of its diction would have corrected that taste for excessive rhetorical ornament into which juvenile minds are apt to fall; and the ample body of notes with which it is enriched would have called forth his classical learning, and have been an excellent introduction to the study of ecclesiastical history, especially in regard to Christian doctrine. It is painful to see a mind of the first order left to luxuriate, without any of the salutary restraints and directions which a just discipline and experience would supply. To this day it is a serious defect in the system of Wesleyan Methodism, that it makes no adequate provision for the education of its ministers. A few of them, by the force of their own talents and application, have risen to considerable eminence as scholars and preachers; but the usefulness of the greater part of them has been retarded through life by the want of a sound literary and theological training.

At the conference of 1797, Mr. Watson's name was placed in the list of the preachers on trial who had travelled one year; and he was appointed to the Castle-Donington circuit, under the superintendency of Mr. George Sargent, through whose ministry he had been convinced of sin. By some mistake he was called Robert; an error which was repeated the following year in the minutes of conference. In this station he conducted himself in an upright and Christian manner;

attended his appointments with regularity; and preached with fidelity and success; but his studies still retained their desultory character; so that his improvement in solid and useful learning was not equal to his opportunities and capacity.

Mr. Watson has been heard to say that, during these early years of his ministry, one of his most favourite books was Matthew Henry's "Method for Prayer." His admiration of this work was more than ordinarily strong; he carried the volume about with him; and scarcely a day passed in which he did not spend some time in the perusal of it. From this manual he doubtless derived considerable advantage. It would suggest to him many excellent plans of sermons; assist him in the Scriptural elucidation of several important topics; and give to his public addresses to the throne of grace a sober and devotional character, as well as great variety both of thought and expression. But the constant reading of that book, at this early period of his life, was productive of one inconvenience which he regretted, and from which he was never entirely free. It induced a habit of quoting Scripture incorrectly. His extempore citations from the word of God, in his discourses, were not always verbally correct, even when the true meaning was given. Such a habit was likely to be produced by the daily use of a book consisting principally of passages of holy writ, not literally quoted; but so altered as to form continuous supplications, praises, and thanksgivings, on all subjects connected with personal religion, and the interests of the Church and the world. The habit, however, into which Mr. Watson fell was rather the result of an immoderate use of an excellent book, than a necessary consequence of such compilations upon a youthful mind. As the doctrines and duties inculcated in the Christian pulpit derive all their authority from the word of God, that word should always be adduced with the most perfect accuracy; and an aptitude in doing this cannot be too sedulously cultivated by every Christian preacher. In the latter years of his life Mr. Watson was not under the influence of this habit to any serious extent; but he was aware of the defect, and attributed it to the cause just specified.

During Mr. Watson's stay in the Castle-Donington circuit, he did not satisfy himself with a general inculcation of evangelical truth; but directed his preaching against prevalent evils, under whatever form they might be presented. In those times the theological sentiments of Mr. Winchester excited considerable attention among religious people. By connecting Calvin's theory of absolute predestination, with Arminius's doctrine of general redemption, and applying his principles to the fallen angels, as well as to the human race, he contrived to secure, as he thought, the final restoration of all lapsed intelligences. He contended zealously for the ultimate recovery to purity and heaven, not only of that part of mankind who die in their sins, but of all the fiends of hell; and in the teeth of Holy Scripture contemplated a period when the "worm that dieth not" shall expire, "the fire that never shall be quenched" will cease to burn, and when the apostate of whom the Lord said, "Good it had been for that man if he had never been born," shall bless the day when he was brought into existence. The works of this theologian, which are now nearly forgotten, display considerable ingenuity; yet they are full of sophistry; and his canons of Scriptural interpretation are so licentious as to lead directly to skepti-

cism. To superficial thinkers, however, his scheme appeared to exalt the Divine benevolence, and to be sanctioned by reason and humanity; and hence, not a few persons professing godliness, in different parts of the kingdom, became its admirers and advocates. Young as he was, Mr. Watson saw the character and tendency of this popular error. He perceived that it makes the sinner against God the self-complacent judge of his own demerit, that it magnifies the mercy of God at the expense of his justice and truth; contradicts the express testimony of revelation; represents the great end of legal punishment, not as the maintenance of order, by operating upon the fears of moral agents, but merely the reformation of the offender, leaving the authority of law unprovided for; and that in its moral effect, it is equally pernicious to the Church and the world. By holding out to the unregenerate the assurance of final happiness, even if they should die in their sins, it neutralizes the principal motive to immediate repentance and conversion; and renders wicked men scarcely objects of pity to their pious neighbours. Religious people are, in effect, told, that whether they are watchful, circumspect, and devout, or negligent, lukewarm, and even immoral, they cannot in the end fall short of salvation. The Church of Rome, fruitful in inventions, devised a purgatory, as a sort of middle place between heaven and hell. Winchester made hell itself a purgatory. He taught that the design of the Almighty in kindling its fires, and in subjecting men and angels to its miseries, is to bring them to repentance, and prepare them for his kingdom; so that the torments of hell are the road to celestial blessedness. With this ensnaring modification of Antinomianism Mr. Watson held no compromise. He detected its sophistry, and warned his hearers of the fearful consequences connected with its practical adoption. A sermon which he preached upon this subject, at Barrow, commanded great attention. It roused the opposition of one of Winchester's disciples, and led to the interchange of several letters between him and the preacher who had so faithfully raised the warning voice. This correspondence, it appears, is irrecoverably lost; but there is reason to believe that in conducting it Mr. Watson showed a knowledge of the questions at issue, and powers of argumentation, which were highly honourable to a person of his age. On several subjects of this nature, he gave pleasing indications of his future eminence as a theologian.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Watson's removal to the Leicester Circuit—Method of Study—Case of strong Temptation—Poetical Composition—Appointment to the Derby Circuit—Success of his preaching in Derby—First Publication—Disputes in the Methodist Connection—Character and Labours in the Derby Circuit—Admission into full Connection with the Conference—Appointment to the Hinckley Circuit—Begins the Study of Hebrew—Theological Studies—Indiscretion—Reported to have embraced heterodox Opinions—Unkindly treated—Retires from the Itinerant Ministry—Did not hold the Tenets imputed to him—Enters into Business—Marriage—Divine Call to the Ministry—Becomes a private Member of the Methodist New Connection—Enters upon the Ministry in that Body—Appointment to the Manchester Circuit.

During the year in which Mr. Watson was stationed at Castle-Donington, he spent a Sunday in Leicester, having exchanged places with one of the preachers resident in that town. On this day he preached two sermons on Hebrews xi, 6: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." In the first of these discourses he undertook to prove the being and perfections of God, in opposition to that branch of infidel philosophy which denies a first cause, a superintending providence, and a moral government; and in the second, he directed the attention of the congregation to the manner in which God is to be sought, and the reward which will crown the exertions of those who seek him according to his word and will. These sermons displayed such a range of thought, a power of reasoning, a richness and force of diction, and a glow of pious feeling, as excited great surprise, especially when viewed in connection with the youthful aspect of the preacher; and a strong desire was expressed that he might be appointed to the Leicester circuit the ensuing year. A request to that effect was forwarded to the conference; and he was accordingly sent to that station, under the superintendency of the Rev. Jonathan Edmondson. This appointment was in every respect a happy one. His lot was cast among an affectionate people, who esteemed and loved him; and his labours were both acceptable and useful. Here one of his most intimate and faithful friendships was formed,—that with Mr. Carr,—which only ended with his life. But the greatest advantage which he derived from this appointment arose from his intercourse with his superintendent; who was himself a great reader, a hard student, and withal a kind-hearted and friendly man. From him Mr. Watson received valuable advice and help in the acquisition of different branches of knowledge; and for the person of this enlightened "guide of his youth" he ever after cherished a strong regard. The following particulars respecting this part of Mr. Watson's personal history have been furnished by Mr. Edmondson, who has been spared to survive his distinguished friend:—

"In the year 1798 Mr. Watson was stationed with me at Leicester. I soon perceived that he was a youth of very superior parts; that he had a most surprising grasp of intellect; and that, if he held on his way, he would become one of our brightest luminaries. I could not render him all the assistance he should have had at that critical period of his life; but I did what I could; and, with a generosity of soul worthy of himself, he always expressed a grateful sense of my poor services.

"As an inmate of our family he was social, friendly, and affectionate. He gave no trouble, was well-pleased with every thing, and was greatly beloved by all under my roof. We never saw him out of temper. He never put on any lofty airs; but was humble, modest, and unassuming. We never had an angry word, an unkind look, or the slightest interruption of a most delightful friendship; and when he left us, at the end of the year, we sustained a loss in our domestic circle which we deeply deplored.

"The studies of Mr. Watson, before he came to Leicester, had been extremely irregular and desultory; and he had acquired such a habit of passing rapidly from one thing to another, without going to the bottom of any, that it was difficult for him to fix his thoughts for any length of time upon any given subject. But when he conquered that habit, he could acquire more information in a few days, than some others could in as many months. Perceiving this defect, I strongly urged the necessity of steady perseverance in all his literary pursuits; and afterward found that my advice had not been disregarded.

"The principal subject of his study was divinity; but he did not altogether neglect the sciences. What he had learned of Latin when a boy he had partly forgotten; and he had never turned his attention to the Greek of the New Testament. But in after life, by persevering application, he acquired a familiar acquaintance with both those languages.

"As a reader, he had no taste for common and ordinary works. Standard books, of high reputation, were his favourites; and that circumstance assisted him much, when he became an author, both in regard to the style and sentiments of his valuable publications; though I am not aware that he adopted any writer as a model of composition. His memory was remarkably strong. He told Mrs. Edmondson, that if he read a work once, it was almost all his own; and that if he read it twice, it was his own altogether.

"I gave Mr. Watson a plan of reading and study, adapted to the itinerant life, which I had formed for myself, and which I afterward published in my 'Essay on the Christian Ministry.' How far this plan was observed by him, while he continued to travel, I cannot say; but I know it met with his approbation, and that he adopted it while we were stationed together. When we went out into the circuit, our saddle bags were loaded with books; and when we returned, we generally gave an account of what we had read and studied. Our circuit was not one of the most extensive, but it included Melton-Mowbray; and we were a fortnight out and a fortnight at home. During the fortnight at home we walked thirty or forty miles a week; and supplied Leicester, and six or eight adjacent villages, generally returning home three or four miles after the evening service. I mention this to show the necessity and utility of the plan now given to an itinerant preacher.

"While I was in that circuit I made a resolution to select some important subject of meditation on every journey, when I was alone; or of conversation, on every journey when I had company. This I recommended to Mr. Watson, and have reason to believe he continued to observe it in after life; for I have heard that he could employ his thoughts on the most profound subjects while walking even in the noisy streets of London.

"Finding that Mr. Watson had an extraordinary gift in composition, I proposed that he should write essays on given subjects, and read them to me when finished. This he did with considerable success, and very much to my satisfaction. The first subject, I believe, was the best method of redeeming time; but what became of that, or his other early essays, I cannot say. I know that they were valuable; and am of opinion, that, if they could be recovered, they would do him credit, even now, when his literary character stands so high. We had then several works on the ministry, and many ordination sermons and charges, which we examined with great care. Mr. Watson compared them together, and prepared a treatise on the Christian ministry; but that has been long since lost or destroyed.

"Mr. Watson's temper was noble and generous, without the slightest tinge of suspicion, or mixture of either littleness or meanness. He indulged in the innocent cheerfulness of youth, and occasionally amused his friends with anecdotes of an extraordinary character; but he was generally grave, solemn, and dignified.

"When he travelled with me he was much esteemed as a preacher, though not remarkably popular. His sermons were not of that finished character which they assumed in his riper years; and yet there was in them a strength of mind and a grasp of thought which was admired by all judicious hearers. I heard him occasionally; and was of opinion that his discourses were more remarkable for boldness of thought, and appropriate figures of rhetoric, than for regularity of composition."

While in the Leicester circuit Mr. Watson's studies were not exclusively directed to divinity, literature, and science. He also turned his attention to some of the useful arts of life; and his ever-active mind aspired to an acquaintance with every subject within his reach. In his visits to the different villages he made minute inquiries into the nature of the various manufactures in which the people were engaged. Nor did he satisfy himself with verbal answers, and the inspection of the machines and operations which were presented to his view; but at the houses where he lodged he often tried his skill in wool combing, stocking weaving, and other employments, as a matter of relaxation from severer pursuits.

With some men, preaching is a sort of mechanical exercise. They can speak with fluency on most theological topics, especially after a certain degree of premeditation and writing; and, relying upon their own powers of memory and elocution, they are accustomed to address their congregations with little variation of either manner or feeling. Very different from this were Mr. Watson's views and habits in regard to the Christian ministry. It was, indeed, his practice both to study and write with reference to the pulpit; but he felt, at the same time, that he could not preach with comfort to himself, unless the Holy Spirit were to excite in him suitable affections when delivering God's truth; and thus give him an "utterance" which unassisted human nature can never attain; and that he could not preach with profit to the people, unless that Spirit were to apply the word to their understandings and consciences. He therefore gave himself to prayer, especially in his closet; and earnestly implored the blessing of God both upon himself and his hearers. Although his mind was sometimes exercised by strong temptations, in common with every "good minister of Jesus Christ;"

yet he was not disappointed of the Divine blessing; but often proved, that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" in preaching, as well as in acts of devotion, and in religious duties generally. A remarkable instance of this kind occurred one Thursday evening in Leicester. On entering the pulpit, at the usual time of Divine service, he requested the prayers of the congregation in his behalf in a very feeling manner; adding, that his mind had been in a state of distressing perplexity and embarrassment through the day, nearly the whole of which he had spent in prayer; that, immediately before he came to the chapel, he had been upon his knees a full hour, pleading with God for his blessing and help; and that he was still in doubt whether he should be able to preach at all. After this statement, by which the sympathy of his friends was excited, and their supplications for him were called forth, he read, as his text, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," Gen. vi, 3; and then preached with great enlargement and power. The sermon was very striking and impressive; and its effect upon the congregation most salutary and beneficial. Nearly all present were deeply affected by the train of thought into which he was led; and several persons united in an urgent request that the sermon might be printed. To prevent all possibility of pecuniary loss to him, and to express the sense they entertained of the discourse, they engaged to assist in the sale of the publication, and pledged themselves to give half a guinea for every copy which they might purchase for their own use. He acknowledged his obligations to the kindness of his friends, but refused to comply with their request; perhaps thinking that it was the influence which attended the delivery of his sermon that constituted its principal interest; and that he had no reason to believe the same influence would attend its perusal, should it appear in print. Many persons who have heard particular sermons with deep feeling, wonder whence their emotions originated, when the same sermons are read in silence and with critical attention.

That Mr. Watson's mind was eminently poetical, will be readily conceded by those who have attended his ministry, or read his works; but at no period of his life did he pay much attention to poetical composition. His mental conceptions often partook of the true sublime; and he could easily clothe them in diction of appropriate force and beauty; but it was seldom that he suffered his thoughts, noble and lofty as they were, to flow in "harmonious numbers." Occasionally he indulged himself in versification; but his mind was too busily employed with other subjects, which he deemed of superior importance, to study poetry as an art. One of his poetic effusions, written at Leicester, and presented to his friend Mr. Carr of that town, has been preserved; and is no mean specimen of his capabilities in that department of literature. He gave it as an "imitation;" but the name of the poet whose manner he professed to copy has escaped recollection. Some of the thoughts, it will be observed, are borrowed from Adam's morning hymn, as given in Paradise Lost. The structure of the verse occasionally indicates a want of practice; but the youth who wrote these stanzas could, in after life, had he turned his attention to the subject, have produced poetry of more than ordinary merit.

PRAISE TO GOD.

These are thy works alone, O God of power,
And these thy heavenly attributes display;
Moving, reveal new glories every hour,
And pencil thy perfections bright as day.

Fairest of all, thyself enthroned above,
Fountain of being, life's ethereal flame,
Object Divine of universal love,
In ages past, and years to come, the same.

Ye morning stars, the first-born sons of light,
Ye angel choirs, pour forth your notes along;
Stretch all your powers, your ardours all unite,
And swell the' august, the universal song.

Struck out of darkness, I, while life's pure flame
Shall glow within, and animate this clay,
Oft as the rising sun thy praise proclaim,
And oft as he, declining, ends the day.

Praise from thy lower works to thee shall rise,
Inanimate and animate conspire;
The variegated earth, and starry skies,
And brutes themselves, shall strike the sounding lyre.

The sun, the mighty sovereign of the day,
Whose powerful beam the genial warmth inspires,
Shines not in vain, but pays to thee the lay,
Who gav'st him birth, and kindledst up his fires.

Queen of the night, we hail thy silver gleams,
Instance of goodness and of care Divine,
Which, when we lose the sun's superior beams,
To lighten up our darkness bid thee shine.

The starry arch, the wide ethereal blue,
The comet's sweep in vast eccentric line,
The circling systems, and the fiery glow
Of central suns, all praise thee as they shine.

The rushing hurricane, the whisp'ring breeze,
The pois'nous wind, and the salubrious air,
The gentle zephyrs quiv'ring on the trees,
Alike thy justice and thy love declare.

The boist'rous ocean, too, the finny swarm,
The flowery tribes that on earth's surface grow,
All that the philosophic sage can charm,
All that is grand above, or good below:

Join nature all, join all harmonious tongues!
Sacred to thee be every tuneful string!
See clouds of incense rise; hark, hark their songs,—
"Great is the Lord, our Father, God, and King!"

1798. R. Watson.

At the conference of 1799, Mr. Watson took leave of his esteemed superintendent and kind friends in Leicester, and repaired to Derby, where he was appointed to labour with the Rev. Messrs. William Shelmerdine and Anthony B. Seckerson; men whom he esteemed and loved to the end of life, for their piety, sense, and Christian affection. Mr. Sargent was then leaving the Derby circuit; and Mr. Watson hastened to his new appointment, where he spent a week in the house

of his former colleague and his kind wife before their removal. On the first Sunday after his arrival he preached in Derby; and under his ministry two persons are said to have obtained the salvation of the Gospel. One of these was a blind woman belonging to the workhouse; who from that time adorned her profession, and some years after died in the Lord. He was greatly affected by this display of the Divine goodness, in thus owning his instrumentality; and resolved to devote himself afresh to the service of God and his Church. His personal piety was sensibly improved by this occurrence. Mr. Edmondson says, "The friends in Derby esteemed Mr. Watson very much; and thought that, if he held on his way, he would be a first rate preacher in the connection. That year he generally paid me a visit once a month, either at Burton-upon-Trent, or at some other convenient place in the circuit; so that our intercouse, as friends and fellow students, was kept up with mutual pleasure."

Mr. Seckerson states, that, during this year, Mr. Watson "possessed an affectionate interest in the regards of his fellow labourers; with whom he acted in the most entire concert, in maintaining and exercising the various branches of Christian discipline; and especially upon one trying occasion, when a strenuous effort was made to exclude one of our societies and congregations from a chapel which they had built, and in which they had long and peaceably worshipped God. The attempt thus made was happily rendered unsuccessful; and the religious privileges of our people were preserved."

In regard to Mr. Watson's mental character and habits at this period, Mr. Seckerson adds, "It is observed, in the Life of the late Bishop Heber, 'His elder brother used to say, Reginald devoured books, rather than read them. At almost a single glance his eye caught the contents of a whole page; and his memory was so remarkably tenacious, that such passages as particularly struck him were remembered with almost verbal accuracy.' Very similar to this was the strength of mind and memory which I have often noticed and admired in Mr. Watson, when we were stationed together, and he was only in the nineteenth year of his age."

While Mr. Watson was stationed in Derby, a clergyman in that town excited some attention by the circulation of a weak and illiberal pamphlet, entitled, "An Address to the People called Methodists." The design of this unworthy publication was, to alienate the public confidence from the Methodist ministry, by attempting to prove that the preachers have no legitimate authority; and that the doctrines which they teach are erroneous and enthusiastic. The writer contended, that there is no regeneration beside that which is assumed to take place in baptism; that the Methodists lay claim to the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit; that they deprive men of innocent pleasures and gratifications, and subject them to needless terrors and alarms; that justification is a very difficult subject, concerning which there have been many clashing opinions among good men; and that people had far better set themselves to discharge the duties of life, than give themselves anxious concern respecting the manner of their justification before God. The charges and reasonings of this author had been advanced and refuted a hundred times; yet as the pamphlet was extensively and gratuitously circulated, and was calculated to make

an injurious impression in certain quarters, an antidote was deemed desirable; and Mr. Watson was requested by the friends in Derby to write an answer to it. With this request he complied; and produced his maiden publication, under the title of "An Apology for the Methodists; in a Letter to the Rev. J. Hotham, B. A., Rector of St. Werburgh's, Derby, in answer to a Pamphlet lately circulated among the inhabitants of Derby, entitled, 'An Address to the People called Methodists. By Richard Watson, preacher of the Gospel." Of course, this production was vastly inferior to the eloquent, argumentative, and finished works which in subsequent years emanated from his pen; yet it was no discredit to the youth of nineteen. As the author with whom he entered the lists had indulged himself pretty freely in invective and insinuation, and had given himself no trouble to ascertain the sentiments of the people whom he assailed, Mr. Watson treats him with little ceremony, and tells him some truths which we may suppose would not be very palatable. There are passages in this concise publication of considerable power and acuteness, and which give pleasing indications of future eminence; although the style is not formed, and the punctuation inaccurate. The motto which is selected from Cowper is very appropriate, and describes the character of those rash men who speak and write before they either read or think.

During these early years of Mr. Watson's itinerancy the Methodist connection was greatly agitated by controversy respecting ecclesiastical order and discipline, and the administration of the sacraments. Many of the societies had long desired to receive the Lord's Supper at the hands of their own preachers; and it had required all Mr. Wesley's influence and energy to repress that feeling, and preserve the general tranquillity of the body. While he lived, the power of regulating the connection was vested in himself; and at his death, in the year 1791, by his appointment it devolved upon the conference, the members of which were placed in a situation of great embarrassment and fearful responsibility. The call for the sacraments in the Methodist chapels, and for public religious service in what were called Church hours, in several quarters, was loud and urgent; and in addition to these demands, not a few contended for a larger measure of lay agency in the management of the societies, and of the general affairs of the connection, and for guards against the possible abuse of ministerial power. After anxiously and maturely considering these subjects, the conference met the wishes of the societies by adopting the "Plan of Pacification," in the year 1795, and various other important regulations which were detailed in an "Address to the Societies," in the year 1797. The concessions and arrangements contained in these documents gave great and general satisfaction to the connection; and their practical wisdom and utility are demonstrated by the fact, that, so far as the subjects to which they relate are concerned, to the present day they have secured the peace of the body; and its prosperity and success during this time have exceeded all that had been previously witnessed. These measures, however, did not meet the views of every one; and a few preachers, with a number of private members of society and others, separated from their brethren, and formed the "Methodist New Connection," in the year 1798.

In the discussions which led to these results, Mr. Watson took

little or no interest. He was satisfied with the discipline of the body, and with those modifications of it which men of greater wisdom and experience than himself deemed it necessary to make in peculiar emergencies. The societies in the circuits where he laboured were in peace; and his mind was too much occupied with Biblical and theological studies, and the acquisition of information on all subjects within his reach, to concern himself with affairs of this nature. He read none of the numerous publications, which were then so eagerly and extensively circulated, recommending deep and extensive changes in the Methodist discipline and order, but with diligence and zeal pursued "the noiseless tenor of his way;" for his leading desire was, to be a pastor according to God's own heart, feeding the people with knowledge and understanding, Jer. iii, 15. His inattention to the subject of Church government perhaps may be excused, but it is not to be commended. Had he carefully studied the Methodist economy, and compared it with the principles of ecclesiastical order laid down in the New Testament, he would have been better qualified for his official duties as a Methodist preacher, and better prepared for those unseen trials which awaited him.

His character and labours in the Derby circuit were very cordially approved by the societies and congregations, who were anxious to secure his services a second year; but the delicacy of his health, he thought, rendered him unfit for that station, and induced him to decline their request to remain with them as one of their ministers. The wisest of men are often very imperfect judges of things relating to themselves. Had Mr. Watson continued at Derby, with his faithful and affectionate colleagues, Messrs. Shelmerdine and Seckerson, who knew his worth, he would have escaped the calamitous circumstances in which he was involved during the ensuing year, and which filled with bitter sorrow and vexation so large a portion of his life. The circuit was very extensive, reaching to a place within four miles of Chesterfield; many of the journeys were long and bleak; the accommodations in several of the country places, both in regard to food and lodging, were very indifferent; he was afraid lest his strength should fail, as it had done during the first year of his itinerancy; and therefore wished to be removed to another station, more congenial to his habits, and feeble constitution. The friends in Derby, especially the more judicious and intelligent of them, duly appreciated his excellencies, and were sorry to be deprived of his ministry so soon; and therefore took an affectionate leave of him at the expiration of the year, when he accompanied his superintendent to London, for the purpose of being admitted into full ministerial connection with the conference. Having passed acceptably through the four years of his probation, and undergone a strict examination, both in regard to his personal piety and his doctrinal views, he was cordially approved by his fathers and brethren, and solemnly set apart to the full duties of the Christian ministry, and appointed to the Hinckley circuit, having then attained to the age of twenty years and six months.

Mr. Watson entered upon his work in his new appointment under very encouraging circumstances. His talents as a preacher had been greatly improved by exercise; his attainments as a theologian were very considerable; he had the full confidence of his brethren; by

attending the conference he had seen and heard the fathers and most esteemed ministers of the connection; and he must have been more deeply than ever impressed with the efficiency of the body to which he belonged, and its adaptation to reform the morals and promote the salvation of mankind. His past success, his present prospects, and the examples of ministerial zeal and ability with which he was surrounded, all conspired to operate upon his ardent and ingenuous mind, and to stimulate him to renewed diligence both in his ministry and studies. Previously to this period he had walked twenty miles to hear the far-famed Mr. Bradburn preach; and he never lost the impression which the sermon of that distinguished orator produced. He often related this adventure; and sometimes said, in reference to it, "I am not a very excitable subject; but Mr. Bradburn's preaching affected my whole frame. I felt the thrill to the very extremity of my fingers; and my hair actually seemed to stand on end." Mr. Edmondson, his faithful and tried friend, was now in the neighbouring circuit of Ashby-de-la-Zouch; and their improving intercourse was still continued.—"While he was stationed at Hinckley," says that excellent man, "Mr. Watson paid me a visit at a village near Ashby; when I advised him to enter upon the study of the Hebrew language, assuring him, from my own limited experience, that he might soon read a considerable portion of the Old Testament with ease. He took the advice; and on that day month, meeting me again at the same place, he read the first Psalm in Hebrew, accounting grammatically for every word; and he read to me a beautiful paraphrase on the whole Psalm, which he had drawn up from the fine ideas expressed in the original. Such, indeed, was the strength of his mind, that he could quickly master any subject, however difficult, to which he directed his attention."

For some time he had been successfully engaged in reading the Greek Testament; and having, with such encouraging results, entered upon the study of the Hebrew Bible, the rich and endless stores of sacred literature were placed within his reach, and offered the highest gratification to his understanding and taste. But while he was thus employed in the duties of his office, and in laudable endeavours to render himself "an able minister of the New Testament," he met with trials which he had never anticipated, and for which therefore he was not prepared. His happiness as a man, and his usefulness as a minister, were about to undergo a serious interruption. His reading was unbounded; but it was not always judiciously selected; and perhaps it was not in every instance duly sanctified by prayer. At this time the doctrine of the trinity engaged his special attention; and he read all the books within his reach that bore upon the subject. Some of these were far from paying that absolute deference to the Holy Scriptures which is requisite in all questions of this nature; and mixed up the simple and authoritative declarations of inspiration with the speculations of a vain philosophy. It is not therefore surprising, that his mind was occasionally perplexed, though he never denied those sound and orthodox views of Divine truth in which he had been trained.—When the late Mr. Benson was a young man, and devoted to theological studies, he enjoyed the friendship and correspondence of Mr. Wesley; and happy would it have been for Mr. Watson had he been favoured with the advice and control of some such master-mind in the earlier

years of his public life. It was his misfortune to be generally associated with men greatly inferior to himself in knowledge and intellectual power. In one of his letters to Mr. Benson, Mr. Wesley says, "I believe just what is revealed, and no more; but I do not pretend to account for it, or to solve the difficulties that may attend it. Let angels do this if they can; but I think they cannot. I think even these

'Would find no end, in wandering mazes lost.'

Some years since I read about fifty pages of Dr. Watts's ingenious treatise upon the glorified humanity of Christ. But it so confounded my intellects, and plunged me into such unprofitable reasonings, yea, dangerous ones, that I would not have read it through for five hundred pounds. It led him into Arianism. Take care that similar tracts (all of which I abhor) have not the same effect upon you." Dr. Watts's mischievous book engaged Mr. Watson's anxious attention; and if it produced so injurious an effect upon the mind of Mr. Wesley, when he was advanced in life, and his correct judgment was matured, its influence upon the thinkings of a youth like Mr. Watson could not have been altogether salutary; especially as he had not yet learned accurately to discriminate between the distinct provinces of revelation and philosophy. We have, however, the most decisive testimony that he never renounced "the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

At this period Mr. Watson had acquired considerable readiness in argumentation; and as he was familiar with the different forms which error had assumed in the Church, and the reasons by which they were supported, he took delight in exercising his dialectical skill among his friends. Sometimes, for the sake of argument, and to elicit the views of others, he appeared as the apologist of heterodox opinions, in the presence of persons who were unable to perceive his motives, and incapable of justly appreciating his character. Such a practice may succeed in the schools; but it is a dangerous habit, and should never be resorted to in the presence of "weak brethren." By indulging this propensity Mr. Watson fell under the suspicion of heresy. It was affirmed that he was an Arian, and denied original sin, and the proper Godhead and atonement of Christ.

Had this allegation been true, attempts should have been made to convince him of his errors, and to reclaim him from those doctrinal aberrations which would have utterly disqualified him for the duties of a Methodist preacher. If reasoning and remonstrance had been unavailing, the discipline of the body should have been brought to bear upon his case. A district meeting should have been summoned, to investigate the affair; and had he been found corrupt in doctrine, and at the same time incorrigible, a sentence of suspension till the ensuing conference should have been pronounced. By this just and constitutional process, the accused would have been allowed to answer for himself; and the congregations would have been guarded against an alleged liability to dangerous and destructive error. It is a strong presumption of Mr. Watson's innocence, that no step of this kind was taken; doubtless from a conviction, that the charge could not be substantiated. The course pursued in reference to him was highly censurable and injurious, and deeply revolting to an upright and honourable mind. The report of his alleged heterodoxy was circulated in his

absence; but no means were employed to bring him into the way of truth, from which he was said to have departed. Whether this treatment of Mr. Watson originated in any malignant feeling toward him, or was merely the result of weakness, must be left to the decision of that "day which will try every man's work, of what sort it is." Unapprehensive of what was going on against him, he proceeded in his work, till the terrible fact was disclosed to him in a manner which his spirit was not able to brook. When he went to one of the villages to preach, the house where he had been cordially entertained was closed against him; he was refused permission to address the congregation; and was denied even a night's lodging where he had often been received "as an angel of God." Had he fallen into the errors imputed to him, and made it his business to propagate them, this would have been perfectly proper; for Christians ought not to "receive into their houses" the men who impugn the essential verities of Christianity, nor to "bid them God speed;" but Mr. Watson was guiltless in this matter. The astounding repulse which he met with in this village was more than he could bear; and he immediately withdrew from his work as an itinerant preacher.

That he did not take this step because he was dissatisfied with either the doctrine or discipline of the Methodist connection, as some persons have supposed, but on account of the circumstances just related, we have the most indubitable evidence. We have the testimony of his friends, who enjoyed his confidence; and we have his own solemn and oft-repeated declaration. Speaking of this period of Mr. Watson's life, Mr. Edmondson says, "I will state the case in a few words, and in the fear of God. Mr. Watson had carefully examined the doctrine of the holy trinity, before his appointment to the Hinckley circuit; and after meeting many perplexing difficulties in the course of his inquiries, he adopted the Nicene creed, as the best exposition of that profound mystery; and he afterward defended that view of the subject in his celebrated work on the Sonship of Christ. But some of our people supposed, perhaps from some unguarded expressions in private conversation, that he was an Arian. But it is certain this was entirely misconception or misrepresentation.

"I was involved in the same condemnation; and was interrogated on these subjects, with a threat that my opinions should be stated to the conference; and yet no man living had ever heard me, either in public or private, deny those Scriptural verities. I had carefully studied what is now called the Sonship of Christ, many years before it was debated in our connection, and had taken that sound view of it which was clearly taught by the venerable Wesley, both in his Hymns, and in his Notes on the New Testament. I may say, I had been perplexed, like many others, in studying the doctrine of the trinity; that I had made inquiries of the preachers, which had excited suspicion; but that I never fell into the fatal snares either of Socinianism or Arianism.

"When I heard the report that Mr. Watson was an Arian, and that he had said I was of the same mind, I went to see him at Castle Donington, and asked him if he had ever uttered such a sentiment.—He said, in reply, that it was, like some other things in his own case, all misapprehension and misrepresentation. He then wrote as follows:—

'I am not myself an Arian, nor ever professed myself to be one; and, as I am convinced that Mr. Edmondson no more holds such opinions than myself, I never could say that Mr. E. disbelieved either the Divinity of Christ, or original sin. I believe that what I said respecting Mr. Edmondson's opinions related entirely to the revival, so called, and some peculiar opinions advanced by the advocates of it.*

'*July* 15*th*, 1801. RICHARD WATSON.'

"This paper I have carefully preserved, both as a defence of myself and of the friend who wrote it.

"Mr. Watson did not leave us on account of any change in his views, either of our doctrine or discipline; nor was any charge ever preferred against him, as to his religious and moral conduct, even by those who suspected his orthodoxy; but he was grieved at a wilful misrepresentation of his opinions; and without the least view of joining any other religious denomination, he went into business with a respectable local preacher at Hinckley; but he soon gave it up, and went to live at Castle-Donington, where he married Miss Henshaw, a young lady of genuine piety, and of suitable accomplishments. But, even there he was not kindly treated, though no one could prove any charge against him."

Mr. Burdsall, with whom Mr. Watson spent the first year of his itinerancy, and with whom he carried on a free correspondence on doctrinal subjects to the time of his secession from the Methodist body, fully confirms the statement of Mr. Edmondson, as to the uprightness and orthodoxy of their common friend. "Never would he have left our connection," says Mr. Burdsall, "but for the usage of two or three of his brethren, who had neither the mind nor the generosity that were requisite in order to the right treatment of this active and inquiring young man. At that time we were busily occupied in reading Watts and others on the indwelling scheme, and on some other difficult subjects; and we were sometimes puzzled and perplexed; but that we were ever heterodox, I utterly and indignantly deny. Could I have found one or two letters that he wrote to me about the third and fourth years of his itinerancy, communicating some of his thoughts and criticisms on the theory of Dr. Watts, they would have reflected great credit both on his mind and heart; but those letters, I fear, are irrecoverably lost. We lodged together at the conference of 1800, when he was admitted into full connection; and we afterward held a correspondence by letter until he retired from his public work; and during all that time, I do aver that he was sound in the faith, and well affected to what was right."

In full accordance with these testimonies is the express declaration of Mr. Watson, which he has often repeated in the company of his friends. The writer of this narrative has heard him, on innumerable occasions, avow the fact, that he withdrew from the itinerant ministry solely on account of the personal treatment which he met with, and not because of any alteration of his views respecting either the doctrine or the discipline of the Methodist body. And indeed, not many days

* This document, in which Mr. Watson positively disclaims the tenets that had been charged upon him, was written a few weeks after he had retired from his circuit and itinerant work.

before his lamented death, when all hope of recovery had been abandoned, thinking that perhaps an attack might be made upon his reputation after his decease, by an unprincipled and licentious press, or by some persons to whom he had rendered himself obnoxious, in consequence of the principles which he had professed and defended as a public man, he repeated this avowal to his son-in-law, the Rev. James Dixon; that, in the event of the revival of the old calumny upon his orthodoxy, the means of refutation might be at hand. At the same time he explained the particulars of that unhappy case; and said to Mr. Dixon, "I leave my character in your hands."

While it is contended that Mr. Watson was treated with flagrant injustice when stationed in the Hinckley circuit, it is not pretended that he acted either a wise or a blameless part in the course which he adopted under the injuries which were inflicted upon him. It appears, indeed, to have been impossible that he should continue his public labours, either on that or any other station, with the hope of comfort and success, under the imputations which were then cast upon him; but he does not seem to have used the requisite means to justify himself. His friends in the circuit, at least, were led inadvertently into the sin of unjust prejudice, and evil speaking; and a frank and explicit disavowal on his part of the dangerous errors which he was said to hold, would doubtless have satisfied them. But his spirit was high and unbending. He felt that he possessed powers and knowledge greater than those of which his principal accusers could boast;—for he had confounded them in conversation on many occasions;—and he would not stoop to defend himself against their unjust aspersions. Instead of obeying the apostolic injunction, "Let not your good be evil spoken of," he despised the popular clamour which was raised against him. Deeply did he afterward repent of this unadvised step; and when he referred to it in the latter years of his life, so perfectly had he forgiven the men who laid this stumbling block in his way, that he never spoke of them in terms of unkindness; but attributed the troubles which were consequent upon the resignation of his ministry to the loftiness of his own mind, and a spirit of independence which was impatient of control.

Mr. Watson is greatly to be commended for making no attempts to raise a party, and to promote strife and division in the societies, where he might doubtless have obtained partisans, had he used any efforts to procure them; but on no account ought he to have given up his ministry. By doing this he put it out of the power of his friends effectually to defend his reputation; and, in consequence of this, very unjust suspicions with regard to his orthodoxy were attached to his name for several years. Many persons, who greatly admired his talents and general character, and regarded him as one of the most extraordinary men of the age, for a long time had serious doubts whether he was, in all respects, incorrupt in doctrine. These doubts, indeed, rested upon no good foundation; but they were naturally enough excited by the circumstance, that under a charge of heterodoxy, he had voluntarily retired from the Methodist connection.

But an evil of still greater magnitude was connected with Mr. Watson's retirement. By this act he was disobedient to that Divine call to the pastoral office which he had unquestionably received; and, like

another Jonah, "fled from the presence of the Lord." It is the ungodly remark of a Scottish professor, addressed to students, that, although the Christian ministry may be "deemed gloomy and unpromising," yet it is not to be despised, inasmuch as "the great leisure it affords, if converted to purposes of literature, may be rendered subservient both to fame and fortune." (*Barron's Lectures on Belles Lettres and Logic*, vol. i, p. 593.) Widely different from this were the views of the venerable founders of the English Church; who attach so much importance and sanctity to the sacred office, as to assume that all the true ministers of Christ are specially called by him to labour in the word and doctrine, and to take the charge of his people. To each of her candidates for the ministry, therefore, the momentous question is proposed, "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?" Mr. Wesley, and the religious connection established by him, have always regarded this Divine call as essential to the ministerial character; and hence the inquiry which forms a part of their permanent discipline, "How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?" This is a principle of great practical importance. A minister who enters upon his work, not only under the influence of pure motives, but under the full conviction of a call from God, has the most perfect encouragement to expect Divine help, and at least some degree of success; while he who has no such conviction, but has reason to fear that he has run before he was sent, is constantly liable to the paralyzing apprehension that he has no right to expect the blessing of God upon his labours, and therefore can only "spend his strength for nought." Having received this Divine call, the minister of Christ is not at liberty to leave his work at his own option, under any circumstances of discouragement whatever. His Master has appointed him his sphere of labour; and his Master only can dismiss him from the allotted service. "Through evil report, and through good report," "in perils among false brethren," and under trials which unassisted human nature can never sustain, he is to remember that "a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to him" by its Author; and that a "wo" is denounced against him if he "preach it not." A man who takes up the Christian ministry merely as a profession, or in reference to the acquisition of "fame and fortune," of course may lay it down whenever he finds its duties irksome and inconvenient; but he "whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them their portion of" evangelical "meat in due season," is to remain in that office "till his Lord shall come;" even though his "fellow servants should smite him" in the tenderest part,—his honour and reputation.

It would be difficult to mention any ordinary minister, either in ancient or in modern times, who had more satisfactory and decisive proofs of a Divine call to preach the Gospel than Mr. Watson. He was in very early life made a subject of deep piety; and he possessed the requisite gifts,—powers of elocution, judgment, memory, imagination, far above the common order. Providence had wonderfully prepared his way. His master gave him his liberty under circumstances almost unexampled; fields of labour were unexpectedly opened before him, and invited his cultivation; he had received, in a most unequivo-

cal manner, the official sanction of that branch of the universal Church to which he belonged; he began to preach under a deep and impressive sense of duty, and under the constraining power of the love of Christ; and the blessing of God had so far attended his ministrations, as to render them successful in the conversion of many souls from the error of their way. In the different circuits where he had laboured, he might have pointed to a goodly number of holy and happy Christians, once the slaves of error, vice, and sin, and might have said to those who questioned his credentials, "The seal of mine apostleship are these in the Lord."

Under these circumstances he could not voluntarily resign his ministry, and be guiltless in the sight of God. Nor was such a step at all necessary. No charge whatever was officially preferred against him; it was not pretended that he had ever preached erroneous doctrine; nor was any intimation given to him, that it was intended to accuse him at the approaching district meeting, either on account of his tenets, his attention to the Methodist discipline, or his moral conduct. The discipline of the body would have afforded him effectual protection; and the candour, the justice, the love of his brethren, had an appeal been made to them, would have put that discipline in force. Had he only beckoned to them in his distress, they would have rallied round him, and have "brought forth his righteousness as the noonday." In this case, his valuable labours would have been saved to the connection; and he would have been mercifully preserved from placing himself in circumstances which often wrung his heart with anguish. Here was his capital error. His mind, conscious of its integrity, was wounded beyond endurance; and partly through inexperience, and partly through temptation and resentment, he took the matter into his own hands; and the affecting record stands in the Minutes of Conference for the year 1801, "Richard Watson has desisted from travelling by his own choice." In reference to this period of his life he has been often heard to say, "I only regret that I did not lay my case before my brethren, and leave myself in their hands:" a sentiment which he repeated, with considerable emotion, within a few days of his death, when his anxious attention was directed to his past life, and to its consequences in that world upon which he was just about to enter.

On his retirement from the itinerant ministry among the Methodists, Mr. Watson did not connect himself with any other body of professing Christians. His views of evangelical truth, and his personal predilections, all served to attach him to his old friends, whose religious assemblies he still frequented, and whose pulpits he occasionally occupied. Among them he had received his religious impressions; in happy intercourse with them he had spent the entire period of his Christian life; and his heart and judgment still clave to them as the objects of his affection and confidence. That he might have been restored to his place in the body, had the requisite means been employed, there can be no doubt. Unhappily, no generous attempt appears to have been made to meet his lingering attachment to the connection. Those who knew him best were at a distance, and were probably imperfectly acquainted with the situation in which he was placed; the fault which he had hastily committed in forsaking his work appears to have rendered inexorable the friends by whom he was immediately

surrounded; and, in some instances, he met with open and marked disrespect. In the meanwhile, his mind was far from being at rest; he felt that he had left the path of duty; he saw that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to retrace his steps; his spiritual enjoyments were in a great measure lost; and, although his moral conduct was unimpeachable, as a man of God he was shorn of his strength. Direct religious intercourse with his Christian friends was at length discontinued; and even his attendance upon public worship for a few months was irregular. He laboured with most exemplary diligence to establish himself in business, as a means of honest subsistence; but nothing prospered in his hands. All his powers of ingenuity were put in requisition; but he was baffled at every point; for a merciful Providence designed him for a higher service than that which he had chosen; and would not suffer him to bury his fine talents in secular cares. The subject is too serious in itself, and was connected with too many distressing feelings in the mind of Mr. Watson, or it might provoke a smile to see a man possessed of mental abilities which would ultimately enable him to soar with Milton to the heaven of heavens, and to accompany such men as Butler and Locke in their most profound and original thinkings,—a man whose powers as a theologian and a preacher have been rarely equalled,—assuming the character of an ordinary tradesman in a small market town. So humbled are the noblest minds, when they cease to act under the Divine authority and direction! At this period Mr. Watson was happy in his marriage, but in nothing else; and on some occasions the upbraidings of his conscience, because he had laid aside the ministry, to which he had been called and solemnly set apart, were overwhelming. Once, in particular, when travelling alone, on one of his journeys of business, his feelings of regret and compunction rose to agony; and he expressed his persuasion that the misery of a lost soul could scarcely be more intense than that which he experienced.

In this state his first concern was to regain his spirituality of mind. His late father-in-law, Mr. Henshaw, was a zealous local preacher in the Methodist new connection; and with a reference to his own personal salvation, Mr. Watson was induced to unite himself to a small society belonging to that religious community, at Hemmington, an agricultural village, about a mile from Castle-Donington. His conduct from this time excites a high opinion of his simplicity and godly sincerity. The leader of the class was a farmer's labourer, of plain manners, and humble capacity; and the other members were mostly of the same rank in society. The class met on the evening of a week-day; and, notwithstanding the distance, his attendance was punctual and regular. Scarcely ever was he known to be absent; and he was generally the first in attendance, and often unlocked the door and opened the shutters of the little chapel, where they were accustomed to assemble, and get every thing in readiness for the meeting. It was observed by those who met in the same class, that his religious improvement was very rapid. His piety soon regained its wonted ardour and stability; and it was not long before he was requested to officiate as a local preacher among his new friends. With this request he readily complied; no compromise of principle being required; as the Methodist new connection hold precisely the theological tenets enter-

tained by the Wesleyan body. His preaching was generally approved; he was introduced to persons of respectability and influence in the community with which he was now united; and it was proposed to him to become an itinerant preacher among them. To this he promptly acceded; and it is impossible for language to express the joyous feelings with which he resumed the labours of the regular ministry after this painful interval. He was requested, in the first instance, to go to the Manchester circuit to supply the place of another preacher; and on receiving this appointment, with a light step and a bounding heart he hastened to the sphere of his labours. Scarcely could he have shown more alacrity, had he been for years an imprisoned exile, who had just regained his liberty, and was returning to his kindred and his home. The exercise of his ministry was the grand object to which his mind was now directed. With the principles and details of Church government his acquaintance was very limited; as he had never seriously turned his attention to the subject, nor felt any interest in it. He saw nothing in the discipline of the new connection to hinder him from becoming a minister in that community; especially as the financial regulations adopted in the Wesleyan body, affecting him as a married man with two children, and other causes, seemed to preclude all hope of re-admission in that quarter; otherwise there is every reason to believe that he would have preferred a union with his old friends. It is a high and permanent honour to the Methodist new connection to have been a means of rescuing from obscurity and sorrow this great and excellent man; and that it afforded him an opportunity of cultivating those talents by which multitudes of mankind have been so greatly instructed and edified, and which are likely to promote the interests of generations yet unborn. Had it not been for that connection, according to all human probability, he must have sunk under an overwhelming load of distress and unmerited obloquy.

On his admission into the new connection, Mr. Watson gave the most perfect satisfaction, as to the correctness of his doctrinal views, after a very strict examination, with reference to his alleged heterodoxy; but on the subject of Church government, concerning which he knew and cared little, no questions whatever were proposed to him. He arrived in Manchester in the autumn of 1803; and it was arranged that he should reside at Stockport. As he left the Hinckley circuit in the spring of 1801, he was more than two years and a half unemployed in the regular duties of the ministry: a period of his life during which he was taught many important lessons, but upon which he could never look with pleasurable emotions. He had maintained a high reputation before the world, for uprightness and integrity; but it was a blank in his history as a minister of Christ, who had nothing to do but to save souls. The entire case is highly monitory. It is calculated to teach young ministers caution and self diffidence; and their seniors, who are over them in the Lord, to watch over them with fidelity and kindness. Had the Methodist connection made provision for his theological training, before he was sent into a circuit as an itinerant preacher, it was Mr. Watson's full conviction that he should have escaped the evils into which he fell; and that his personal comfort and public usefulness would have suffered no interruption. In the latter years of his life his heart yearned over the young ministers who are appointed to study and preach without an instructer and a guide.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Watson's Satire upon the immoderate Use of Instrumental Music in Public Worship—Approval of the Discipline of the New Connection—Memoirs of William Bradbury and John Cash—Sermon on Religious Meditation—Sermon on Sunday Schools—Letter to Mr. Edmondson—Zeal and Labours—Appointed to the Liverpool Circuit—Letters to the Messrs. Faulkner—Verses on Charity—Admitted into full Connection with the Conference—Writes the Annual Address to the Societies—Appointed to Liverpool—Writes a History of that Town, and of the Reign of George III.—Jeu-d'esprit—Commences the Liverpool Courier—Letter to Mr. John Faulkner—Writes the Address to the Societies in 1808—Returned a third Year to Liverpool—Nature of his Preaching—Publishes an Answer to Mr. Roscoe.

At Stockport Mr. Watson was not only respected by his own people, but also lived on terms of intimacy with some of the Methodists of the Wesleyan connection. They admired his spirit, abilities, and knowledge, and were highly gratified with his frequent visits. During his stay in that town, the Wesleyan Society there was agitated by a dispute respecting the use of instrumental music in the public worship of God; and Mr. Watson was induced to write a satire upon the most distinguished of the parties, which was printed and put into circulation. Some of the rebukes contained in this small and ephemeral publication were duly merited; others are totally inapplicable, being founded in mistake, occasioned, doubtless, by misinformation. This is the case especially in what is said concerning the decision of the conference in regard to the contending parties. It is also just to say, that, as the writer belonged to another community, and was not immediately interested in the questions at issue, it would have been more seemly if he had forborne to interfere. The tract was smart and clever, and afforded amusement to witty people, at the expense of an erring individual, and of the parties by whom he was sanctioned and supported; and the design of it was praiseworthy. It was intended to expose an evil of very serious magnitude,—the immoderate use of instrumental music in public worship; yet its moral effect was not good, in consequence of the nature of the composition. The style was an imitation of the historical books of the Old Testament; and therefore presented an example of that levity which connects sacred things with ridicule; the practice of which is equally condemned by Christian piety and good taste. In the subsequent years of his life, Mr. Watson had a deep conviction of the evil of such sallies of perverted ingenuity; and no man was more free from all approaches to them, both in his writings and conversation.

When Mr. Watson had become a regular preacher in the Methodist new connection, his general approval of the discipline and order of that body might be expected to follow as a matter of course. He had entered it with a special reference to the exercise of his ministry, and because its theological creed was in full accordance with his own; but as an honest man he was also bound to conform to its usages himself, and to enforce the same conformity on others. It is no just reflection upon him to say, that, immediately after his official connection with that body, and as a natural consequence of his daily intercourse with its ministers and private members, he was led to entertain their views, even before he had deeply studied the principles of Church govern-

ment, or had witnessed, upon an extensive scale, the practical workings of that system which he had adopted.

On his restoration to the full duties of the Christian ministry, his mind was in a great measure at rest; and he soon recovered his wonted cheerfulness and buoyancy. He applied himself to study with a diligence and an ardour almost peculiar to himself; and his "profiting appeared unto all." His habits were sociable; his conversation was lively, instructive, and greatly admired; and his preaching often displayed an energy and a vigour, both of thought and expression, which gave strong indications of future eminence. Among other means of usefulness, he sometimes practised himself in literary composition, with a reference to publication; and his name occasionally appeared in the Magazine of the Methodist new connection, as a contributor to that work. His first communication was a memoir of Mr. William Bradbury, of Manchester; and the second, an account of John Cash, of Warford, in Cheshire; both of which were published in the year 1805, and are written with considerable elegance and spirit. The subjects of these biographical sketches had both belonged to the Wesleyan body, in union with which they had obtained "the faith of God's elect." They had separated from their religious friends in the division of 1798; and, of course, it became their biographer, not only to relate that fact, but also the motives by which they were actuated. These motives are stated in a cursory manner, but yet so as to imply a censure upon the discipline of the Wesleyan connection. This was unavoidable; and supposing Mr. Watson to have concurred in that censure, no candid person would attach to him any serious blame, considering the peculiarity of his situation. With him the comparative merit of the two systems of Church government must, at that time, have been merely a matter of opinion; and that opinion could only be formed on very limited knowledge and observation, and under circumstances strongly calculated to bias the judgment. But the fact is, he had no personal acquaintance with either Mr. Bradbury, or John Cash, in the year 1798; and the history of their secession from the Wesleyan body was supplied by their respective friends; Mr. Watson's only task being that of preparing for publication the documents which were put into his hands. His design was not so much to state his own opinions, as those of the men concerning whom he was writing. This is his own account of the affair, as will appear from a letter in a subsequent part of these memoirs, written by him when he was accused of abandoning his former principles after his return to the connection in which he was originally nurtured, and in which he spent the happiest and most useful part of his life.

The following introduction to the memoir of Mr. Bradbury is worth quoting for the justness of the sentiment it contains, and the eloquence with which it is written:—"One of the most conclusive arguments in favour of Christianity may be drawn from its influence upon the character and conduct of those who cordially embrace its doctrines, and wholly submit themselves to its discipline. If it reclaims them from the practice of vice, if it subdues the unruly passions, if it implants virtuous and holy affections in the human breast, if it sweetens the tempers, and purges away the dregs of envy, malice, and self love, rendering a man not only pious toward God, but also kind and benevolent

to his fellow men; then it achieves a conquest which manifestly proves that it is attended with a Divine and supernatural energy; inasmuch as the whole of human power and reason have frequently been exerted, for the attainment of the same objects, without effect.

"Thanks be to God, that Christianity never was, nor is at present, destitute of this evidence. Time, which works mighty changes in things terrestrial, cannot change or destroy the influence of religion; for, like its glorious Author, it is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' If the first Christians could say, We have our conversation in the world in purity, in knowledge, in long suffering, in gentleness, in the Holy Spirit, in the word of truth, in the power of God, with the armour of righteousness on the right hand, and on the left; we trust that it is not impossible for us to select a number of living characters, of whom the same things might justly be affirmed. Bad as society is, there is not so great a paucity of moral virtue, but that in the circle of our knowledge we can point out one and another who do honour to the Christian profession, and by example, as well as precept, recommend their religion to the notice of mankind.

"Some of those worthies we have the happiness to number among our present acquaintance and friends; and our recollection will furnish us with others, in whose friendship we once shared, whose knowledge instructed us, and whose example fired us with holy emulation.—They are now with God; they have left us for a season; but their memories are still precious to us, and their virtues are engraven upon our hearts."

That Mr. Watson still considered the ministerial office, with its peculiar responsibilities and duties, as a standing ordinance in the Church of God, and not to be modified and contemned by the caprice of unruly men, is manifest from the following remarks respecting John Cash, and the system of ecclesiastical discipline which he had adopted:—"Warmly as he was attached to it, he did not consider it as designed to degrade the ministers of Christ from that authority and influence which the very nature of their office supposes, or as giving a license to captiousness, self will, and unsubmission to rule and order in the people. Every preacher that approved himself by his conduct to be sincere and upright, he venerated as a 'messenger of the Church, and the glory of Christ.'"

In the year 1804 Mr. Watson's name appears in the Minutes of the new connection conference; and he is stated to have travelled one year. In 1805 he was made assistant secretary to the conference: a mark of respect which was never shown by that body to any other preacher at so early a period of his itinerancy.

The next production of Mr. Watson's pen was a sermon; the first pulpit discourse that he ever prepared for publication. The subject was religious meditation; and the text, "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide," Gen. xxiv, 63. It was inserted in the Magazine of the Methodist new connection in an early part of the year 1806; and reflected great credit upon the abilities and piety of the writer. It will be found in the first volume of his sermons; and is at once judicious, eloquent, and devout. While this discourse was passing through the press, Mr. Watson preached a sermon in Stockport, in behalf of the Sunday school connected with the chapel in which

he regularly ministered. The congregation was so impressed with the sentiments of this sermon as to request that it might be printed. He complied with their wishes; and sent it forth into the world under the title of "a Sermon preached at Mount Tabor chapel, Stockport, March 9, 1806; for the benefit of the Methodist Sunday school." It contains passages of considerable force and beauty; and the whole presents strong indications of that philosophic cast of thought, and of those enlarged and comprehensive views, by which he was so distinguished in the subsequent years of his life. Considering the religious education of the poor as a work of patriotism, the preacher says, "We love our country. It is endeared to us by considerations the most important. It is endeared to us by its government. Property is respected; life is sacred; liberty is secured. It is endeared to us by its privileges. 'The Lord hath not dealt so with any nation.' It is endeared to us by its religion. Its religion is Christian; the religion of the cross; the religion of love and charity. It is endeared to us by the character of its inhabitants;—mild, humane, friendly, and benevolent. Would to God we could also say, it is endeared to us by its morality. Here we must hesitate. We are a foolish people, and unwise, and have ill requited the Lord our God.

"To what, then, ought patriotism to be directed? It has secured our civil rights; it has organized our armies; it has rendered our navy invincible; it has extended our commerce, and enlarged our dominions; but there is yet one object to be accomplished, without which well-appointed armies, an invincible navy, extended commerce, and enlarged dominion, will add little to our dignity, our happiness, or our real strength;—I mean, the correction of our morals. Immorality and irreligion as certainly dry up the resources of a nation, and hasten its downfall, as a worm at the root of the finest plant will cause it to fade, to wither, and to die. Wickedness arms God against us; and if he 'speak concerning a nation, to pluck up and to destroy,' no counsels, however wise, no plans, however judicious, no exertions, however vigorous, can avert the sentence. 'Righteousness exalteth a nation;' and every endeavour to promote it is patriotic. In this view the preaching of the Gospel is patriotic; the execution of the laws against vice and immorality is patriotic; the support of Sunday schools is patriotic. From the latter, much may be expected toward national reformation. Their good effects are already obvious; and when they shall have become more general, these will become more striking. Here, then, is a work worthy of your patriotism. Hasten to counteract vice by the inculcation of virtue; to prevent the destructive effects of ignorance by instruction; to purify society by purging the elementary parts of which it is to be composed from corrupting principles and vicious propensities. These exertions, it is true, will not bring down upon you the smile of monarchs, because they will not notice them; but they will insure the approbation of God. This work will not excite the plaudits of the populace; but 'the blessings of them who are ready to perish will come upon you.' Your endeavours will not strike by their splendour, and raise hope by the boldness of enterprise; yet they will not be less effectual; but like the secret, silent influences of the spring, they will penetrate and vivify society; it will bud and blossom, and fill the whole land with fruit."

About this time Mr. Watson addressed a letter to Mr. Edmondson, with whom he had been so happily and advantageously associated in the Leicester circuit some years before. It exhibits, in a striking light, the feelings with which he contemplated his former attachments, and proves that his generous affection for his old friends had not been extinguished by the new connections into which he had been so unexpectedly thrown. The following is an extract :—

" While I write this, the remembrance of our former friendship rushes into my mind. But the social intercourse, the friendly interchange of thought, the joint pursuit of truth, are no more ! In the midst of many changes, under the pressure of many bereavements, what has most affected me is the loss of my friends. Have I deserved it ? I have often said to myself, ' It is true, I have been surrounded with the mists of calumny and detraction ; my conduct, my principles, my intentions have been scrupulously examined ;—NO : they have been presumed upon, and ——— ; but this is my consolation, that, though many of my friends looking at me through a factitious medium, saw me distorted and preposterous, I have not sacrificed one generous thought at the shrine of resentment ; and it gives me the highest pleasure, that there is a time approaching when, in a state more congenial to the happiness of man, the operations of benevolence will be unobstructed by the misapprehensions which mark the imbecility, as they increase the misery of the present.' "

At this period Mr. Watson laboured as a minister of Christ with great fidelity and zeal ; and was much respected for his personal virtues and piety, and for his admirable ministry. Though his health was never vigorous, and occasionally very delicate, like his Divine Master, he often preached in the open air, particularly at Stockport, seeking in order that he might save the lost. Several persons attended his preaching, who refused to unite in Church fellowship with any denomination of Christians ; and with a special reference to their case, he preached three sermons in succession at Stockport, on the duty and advantages of Christian communion. In Manchester he was greatly beloved, and formed some cordial and permanent friendships, particularly with Mr. Foulds and the Messrs. Faulkners, dentists, father and son ; and with Mr. Absalom Watkin ; with whom, for many years, he carried on an improving and affectionate correspondence by letter.

In the spring of the year 1806, he removed from the Manchester circuit to Liverpool, where he was stationed alone. Here he was placed in a situation highly favourable to that mental cultivation upon which his heart was set. His pastoral duties were very limited. He had regularly to supply one small chapel in the town ; and this was nearly the whole of the official duty that devolved upon him ; for with this chapel scarcely any circuit was connected. A large proportion of his time was therefore at his own disposal ; and how well he improved it, his ministry and writings, during the remainder of his life, amply demonstrate. This was a very important era in Mr. Watson's life, and his residence in Liverpool greatly tended to the formation of his character as a public man. Here some of his most valued and lasting friendships were formed ; he had access to literary and scientific institutions ; books on all subjects were within his reach ; and he had frequent intercourse with men of learning and intelligence. At the same time his

preaching excited considerable attention; and Christians of various denominations, particularly the Wesleyan Methodists, both preachers and private individuals, were often found assembled round his pulpit, listening with deep emotion to a ministry equally original, evangelical, and impressive.

The following letters were written during the first year of his residence in Liverpool. They illustrate his personal history, and show that his correspondence was at once affectionate and instructive. It appears from the first of the series, that before his appointment to Liverpool he spent about a month in that town, taking Wigan on his way, where he stayed a Sabbath. Mr. John Faulkner, at that time, was a lively young man, well disposed, but not decidedly pious; and hence the peculiarity of Mr. Watson's manner of address to him. It will be observed, that he recommends to him true religion under the name of "virtue;" and attempts to draw his attention to subjects of infinite importance by means of topics somewhat light and amusing.

To Mr. Faulkner, Jun., of Manchester.

Liverpool, April 24th, 1806.

Dear Sir,—I received yours, and, according to your request, proceed to give you an account of my journey. After the boat was out of sight of Manchester I mounted upon deck, for the purpose of reconnoitering the country, which I had never passed through before. Some pretty landscapes occasionally break upon the view, which in summer must be considerably enriched by the verdure of the fields, and the foliage of the trees. Trafford Moss is an object of interest. A great part of it appears now to be converted into arable land; and the remainder must soon yield the ruggedness and sterility of nature to the dispositions of art, and the cultivation of industry. The aqueduct, over which the canal passes at Barton, ranks, I believe, among the first constructed in the kingdom; but ceases now to be an object of much curiosity or admiration, because we are become familiar with more stupendous works of a similar description. It serves, however, to awaken our admiration of the power of that puny creature, man. His individual physical strength is inferior, we will not say to the elephant or the camel, but even to that of an ass; and yet he rears fabrics which a lapse of ages is required to undermine and destroy. Wisdom, you see, is better than strength; or, rather, wisdom is the strength of man. In feasting my eyes with prospects, and my mind with reflections, upon deck, exposed to a strong and piercing wind, I took a severe cold, which might have been prevented had I cabined myself with the lady you might observe. Thus, you see, the star gazer falls frequently into the ditch. Arriving at Worsley, I and two young men, passengers, with whom I had not exchanged a word by the way, entered equally silent into an inn, where we called for our separate portions of the edible and potable, and, Englishmen-like, munched our morsel in forbidding silence. I had, however, my reflections, which I found more convenient to indulge in by the fireside, over a comfortable meal, than when exposed to the north-east wind. It was feeding the animal and the rational at once. Tired, however, both of eating and thinking, I sunk into a sort of animal lassitude, and mental reverie, from which I was only roused by the thought that I had thirteen miles to walk, and that it was already

P. M. I seized my quarter staff, sprung up, settled my bill, and sallied forth in quest of adventures. Mounting up a hill, on the edge of which the duke of Bridgewater has a house now apparently unoccupied, I was gratified with the extensive prospect which there presented itself:—A fine plain, intersected with enclosures, two canals, plantations bounded at the extremities by Manchester and Warrington. "What a noble plain," said I, "were it not for the canals and enclosures, for two armies to engage in!" I checked the barbarian exclamation, and blessed the God of heaven that the soil was turned up by the plough of the peasant, and not by the hoofs of warlike horses, and the wheels of destructive artillery; that it was dug up by the agricultural and not the entrenching spade; that it was watered by the dew of heaven, and not by the blood of men; that it was a plain in Lancashire, and not in Poland.* No adventures of peculiar moment occuring to divert my attention, and the prospects losing their novelty, I became thoughtful and low spirited. I felt the loss of friends whom I had left. Had I been going directly home, it would have been an alleviation. I hailed the beams of Monday morning in a transport of joy. The boat to Liverpool affords a tedious passage of twelve hours. I was extremely ill of a violent pain in my stomach for four hours of the time. It, however, took off the tedium of the conveyance, and made my journey appear so much shorter, that I was thankful for the visit. I am come to Liverpool, and the end of my paper. What a letter-full of trifles! I had forgot my knee. It continues weak since my walk upon it; but I appprehend no bad consequence. My warmest respects to the whole family. Adieu till conference, if we be spared. Peace, wisdom, and goodness attend you through life.

Your very affectionate friend.

P. S. I have not time to look over my errors. A fellow is waiting for me to tell him whether he should be baptized twice or once.

To Mr. Thomas Faulkner, Dentist, Manchester.

Liverpool, July 2d, 1806.

Dear Sir,—By another revolution of the wheel of human vicissitude, I am found in Liverpool; and as I am unwilling to believe that my friends are so perfectly uninterested as not to wish to know how as well as where I am, I have sat down to scribble four epistles for one post. The air of this place I found, for the first four or five days, to be extremely piercing. I was unwell; and my hard-belaboured lungs "shot pangs, strange pangs; and, as I thought, prophetic of their end." I thank God, however, that they proved to be of a more assimilating nature than I apprehended; and the air and they appear to have entered into a closer alliance, and more strict terms of friendship. I have bathed, and it has been beneficial; I walk along the shore, and enjoy the double advantage of solitude and exercise, meditation and animal refreshment. Could I transplant my old friends to Liverpool, or the advantages of Liverpool to my old friends, I should think myself the happiest man on earth; but "shall it be as thou wilt?" Nature has not formed me in one of those rugged moulds, nor of those rigid materials, which cannot relax and feel. I have felt most sensibly my sepa-

* This letter, it will be observed, was written in the year 1806.

ration from that little chosen band with whom I have spent so many hours of improvement and pleasure. The remembrance is equally painful and pleasing; and it is painful in proportion to the pleasure. I should think worse of myself if I did not feel, though I have felt more than I expected. There are many fibres which entwine themselves insensibly about the heart, and the existence of which we do not even suspect, till the whole is broken by entire separation, and every one bears its proportion of pain. But God will not condemn the softness of the heart; the milder strokes of tender nature. He is love; and he commands the heart that loves him to love the brethren too.

My situation is in every respect comfortable; and I doubt not will remain so. I thank God for an increasing attachment in my own mind to his religion and to his work. He is my God, and I will exalt him. Religion, my dear sir, is all. It is Heaven's greatest gift to man. Fairest, loveliest form in heaven, she has made her dwelling with man, and her delight is with the sons of men. All the fabled power of enchantment belongs to her, and to her alone. She appears, and the desert blossoms as a rose; the darkness of human nature vanishes; every object is gilded with her light; and the immensity beams with glory. She smiles, and the heart is eased of its load of wo, affliction, and sorrows. Her eye darts pity, and her accents breathe forgiveness. Wandering in error, she shows us the path of life. Perverse and obstinate in misery, her influence controls us. Wandering from happiness, in the ardent pursuit of deceitful pleasures, she opens a vista to the skies, and lets loose the powers of the soul among the objects of an immortal life. Celestial visitant, may we never forsake thee! Whatever else we lose, may we possess thee! To whatever separations the changing scene of this present life painfully subjects us, may we ever be joined to thee, and become one spirit with thee!

I feel sincerely attached to every part of your family. May they all be taught of God; and may your decline of life be cheered with the happy prospect of leaving them all in possession of that most invaluable treasure, principles pure and evangelical, and a conduct regulated by just views of God, and faith in Jesus Christ!

Present my love to them all, as though mentioned by name; and may God ever have them in his holy keeping. John may be assured I often think of him; and when I think of him, it is with affection.—Present my affectionate remembrance to Miss Walker when you see her; and inform her that I have not forgotten to pray for her; and that my heart's desire and prayer to God is, that she may be saved. You will not forget my love to Mr. and Mrs. Smith. May they walk in all the statutes and commandments of the Lord blameless! To hear from you, or to see any part of your family at Liverpool, will at any time be peculiarly pleasing to, dear sir,

Yours very affectionately.

P. S. Our children are well; but Mrs. Watson continues poorly. Liverpool has not made any alteration for the better in her health. I hope that Mrs. Faulkner is better than when I left Manchester. May she, in every affliction, find access to the Man of sorrows, the sympathizing High Priest of his people. Respects to any who may inquire after me.

To Mr. John Faulkner.

Liverpool, Sept. 13th, 1806.

My Dear Lad,—You desire me to write you a long letter. I will, though I should tire your patience. But I will not fill it with trifles, because I have too much attachment to you; and because you have too much good sense to desire it. You are now in the most important stage of life. You occupy the anxieties, and inherit the warmest wishes, of your friends. Now is the time for you to acquire that knowledge, to form those principles, to engrave that character upon your mind, which shall favour your entrance into life, and direct you with safety through it. To neglect in the morning of life those pursuits for which it is given, is to put off that which the space between noon and night may not be found sufficient to accomplish. It is, at least, to throw our greatest business into disorder, and to place the highest interests, and the most important engagements, in a situation which can only, at the best, afford the probability of security and accomplishment. There are two objects to which your attention is imperatively called,—knowledge and virtue; children of the same parent, inseparable companions, and mutual helpers of the happiness of man. The importance and value of the first I need not attempt to prove. "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good," and that none but fools love folly, are positions of one of the wisest of men, which neither you nor I shall question. Knowledge is the food of the mind, the support of its vigour, and the parent of its growth. There is a capacity of improvement in the human intellect, of which the more we avail ourselves, the greater amplitude and greatness of soul we acquire; the more we honour God by the improvement of his gifts; the more real dignity we associate with our characters; the more worthy we are of the appellations of rational and immortal; and the better are we fitted for every useful purpose in life. The objects of human knowledge, however, being almost infinite, we must select those which our time and opportunity place within our reach; taking care that whatever we fix upon, it shall be capable of affording us solid and useful information. Have you not seen with disgust a pert, two-legged animal, miscalled a man, on whom a decent education has been thrown away, or its effects been annihilated by a passion for novel reading? His imagination, heated by fiction, and, like a balloon filled with inflammable air, ascending the higher in proportion as the solidity of judgment is separated from it, he acts a contemptible and romantic part in common life; he offends by his ceaseless loquacity; he insults by his ignorance; he becomes intolerable, because he burlesques and caricatures human nature. Sensible conversation is to such a being insipid; sober-minded men constitute a company irksome and repulsive; he glitters, but does not shine; he tattles, but does not talk; his stage is the tea-table, and his audience love-sick lasses. It is well, however, if he stops short of egregious vices; if he learns not the vices of the heroes of novel and romance, and forgets their virtues; if he has not learned to puzzle right and varnish wrong; to blaspheme his God, and to ridicule his laws; to join hollowness to pretended friendship, and to debase love by sensuality. With the names of honour, friendship, and virtue on his lips, he is base, treacherous, and licentious. From reading of this kind, little is to be

gained but sponginess of intellect, pertness of demeanor, and an unnatural character. Is the real world so barren of incident, that we must create an ideal one to furnish it? Is man as he is so barren a subject of speculation, that we must contemplate him as a faultless or faulty monster that the world never saw? Are paintings after nature so scarce, or, rather, is it so difficult to find originals, that we must ever laugh at the daubing of a caricature? Are the calm, tranquil scenes of nature, or the steady, wise dispensations of Providence, so uninteresting, that the magic of romance must ever and anon conjure up exaggerated pictures of beauty or of horror, and the pen of invention be continually forging surprising events, and unexpected catastrophes? Are the common means of information, established by the appointed law of our nature, so defective, or has truth ceased to speak in the still small voice of reason, that we must learn nothing, never hear her charming voice, but in the whirlwind of the passions, the tempest of the soul? It is a libel upon our Maker; it is a satire upon humanity.

Let us seek solid information in history, which makes us acquainted with our forefathers; philosophy, which displays the wondrous works of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; geography, which is conversant with the abodes, habitudes, and relations of men; astronomy, which carries us to distant worlds, and colonies from heaven; and above all in theology, which leads us even to the throne of God, and displays his glory, which presents us with a copy of his secret counsels, and the determinations of his wisdom respecting man, which unfolds the amazing scene of human redemption, and enables us to behold the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;—explains the causes of the misery we all feel, and promises the happiness we all wish;—raises the degraded spirit from the servitude of vice, and restores it to honour, to dignity, to holiness;—forms the purpose of return in the heart of the restless and unhappy fugitive, aids the execution, and withdraws not her influence till she hath placed us in the forgiving bosom of eternal Love, and in the unalienable fruition of life and immortality. This is knowledge, rational, exalting, beneficial, and immortal.

The better part of my epistle must lie over;

> For night, the negro, reigns. "Past twelve o'clock,"
> The drowsy watchman bawls;
> Mute—nature's busied voice, her brawl and hum;
> While horror, creeping on the world of gloom,
> Breathes her dark spirit through this death-like hour.
> Now from her silver-fringed east the moon
> Peeps on the vast of shade, upmounting slow,
> In solemn stillness, till the labouring orb,
> Freed from the caves of darkness, gains its sphere,
> And moves in splendid solitude along.

Having introduced you to knowledge, let me have the honour of presenting you also to virtue. You have the greatest reason to be thankful that you have examples of virtue in those who continually surround you, and whose influence is strengthened by natural relationship as well as religion. To their well wishes I would join my own. How should I, as your friend, wish you to reason with yourself? "Is it all enchantment around me? I cannot, I will not trust it. Something whispers me at this moment, that there is nothing so beautiful, so

sweet as virtue. As for my passions, which were made to submit and serve, shall they usurp the command, and precipitate me whithersoever they will, in spite of reason, and in spite of conscience? Dignity and independence disdain the thought! It is easy to talk and boast of pleasure; but in the opinion of a reasonable being, no gratification that is inconsistent with peace and purity can merit so agreeable a name. Why should I be tempted to dream of liberty, in breaking the laws of virtue? Do I not perceive that I am then only free and self possessed, when I follow cheerfully the dictates of my soul? When I act otherwise, do I not feel myself enslaved and wretched? With regard to the praise of others, what were the caresses of thousands, if conscience should accuse, and reason condemn? Then as to the world, with all her gaudy and fantastic train, how frivolous, impotent, and contemptible, when opposed to the dominion of truth, rising in her naked and unadorned majesty? Begone, ye gay, glittering, but inconstant and deceitful phantoms of criminal and vain delight! By whatever name you may be called, whatever plausible appearance you may assume, begone; and give place to the sublime and invariable honours of wisdom, to the solid and certain joys of goodness! I am purposed that I will not transgress; my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live."

If these become the habitual resolutions of your heart, what sources of never-failing consolation are assigned for you! Yes, virtue is the source, and the only source of pleasure. Thus sung the immortal Milton:—

> "He that has light within his own clear breast
> May sit i' th' centre, and enjoy bright day;
> But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,
> Benighted walks under the mid-day sun:
> Himself is his own dungeon."

Did religion do nothing but save us from the reproaches of our own hearts, it would do much; it would, on this account, be in the highest sense of the word estimable; for a "wounded spirit who can bear?" Where shall we look for happiness, if not within? Should this forsake us, should we never feel the glow of self approbation, and consciousness of virtue, what a gloom is thrown over life! what a house of darkness is the world! what a wretch is man! "Thine heart," says an offended God to a sinner, "thine heart shall meditate terror;" and what then shall soothe and condole us? what human skill can devise a balm to heal wounds inflicted by Heaven? The attempt were vain. It would irritate and inflame, but not heal. From the dark abyss, the dismal chaos of a condemning mind, but one hand can draw us, and that is the hand of mercy; and what may add to our consolation, a hand never solicited in vain. It shall bring our feet out of the mire and the clay, and set them upon a rock. Silencing our fears, and saving us from our doubts, we shall bear the noble testimony of the apostle, "Our hearts condemn us not, and we have confidence toward God." But it does more for us; it gives a positive happiness, fills the void over which we languish, satisfies the hungry soul, and makes glad the sorrowful soul, opens springs in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, makes our cup to run over with blessings, and anoints us with the oil of gladness. Virtue gives whatever is great and good in man. Honour, probity, fidelity, sympathy, friendship, social and domestic happiness; all these

are but empty sounds in the mouth of any but a virtuous character.—She gives joys which vice never, with all her flattering promises, pretends to offer; and bestows a zest, a relish upon those that are common to all, which they cannot have without her. Her influence spreads through life, diverges into every condition, penetrates into every state; the guardian of youth, the honour of manhood, and the crown of age; the shield of prosperity, and the prop of affliction; our guide in actual life, and our solace in retirement. She holds the keys of life, and will finally open to us the gate of immortality.

I must now leave you. Believe me when I say that I wish you every thing that can make you useful and happy.

To Mr. John Faulkner, of Manchester.

Liverpool, Feb. 9th, 1807.

My Dear Sir,—I have embraced the present opportunity to send a short epistle, according to promise; but have a horrid pen, and the penknife is mislaid. We returned from Manchester, as you saw, thick and three-fold in the vehicle; but arrived safe. Danger, however, is neither confined to adventurous voyaging in the mighty world of waters, nor to those terrene conveyances, when you trust your neck to a slender spring and a drunken coachman. She possesses a kind of omnipresence; and successfully wields a thunder storm, or a grain of sand; and accomplishes her purposes by means great and small, dreaded and despised. Somehow or other, it appears that I had incurred the wrath of the old beldame; and the punishment she chose in her wisdom to inflict was a subterraneous plunge into one of those mantraps with which her prime ministers in Liverpool have so plentifully bestrewed the streets. Whether she intended to break my neck or my leg, to perforate my skull or to dislocate my shoulder, I shall not now determine; though the fall was sufficient for all these; but my guardian angel brought me off with only a sprained knee, which I take as a friendly memento.—It has a voice which says, "Walk more carefully in the night, lest a worse thing happen unto thee."

Seriously, I have hurt myself very much, and am yet confined to the house. My journey to Chester was attended with circumstances both painful and pleasing. Travelling in pain, preaching in still greater, with a leg swelled to four times its natural size, and highly inflamed; dragged to and from the chapel in a gig, and confined, when in the house, to its precincts; going into the town in the dark, and leaving it before light, without any gratification arising from the novelty of a place not visited before; tossed upon the river on my return, so as neither to sit nor stand;—these, and other circumstances, were not the most pleasing. On the other hand, the kind attentions of friends, a sense of the Divine presence, and a tolerable degree of freedom in preaching the word, may be balanced against the former; and, on the whole, I have nothing to regret, though the exertion has protracted the recovery of my limb. Next Sabbath I preach a funeral sermon in Mount-Pleasant chapel, belonging to the old friends, who have lent it to us for the occasion; and to-morrow I expect to dine in company with the preachers. Being confined, I have not had an opportunity to call upon Miss ——, with the message of your beloved. I shall call when I can walk; but I suppose that it will be a few days longer.—

Now we are upon the subject, let me say that I am glad you are in love. With the object of your affection I have not the pleasure to be acquainted; but have no doubt she is every way worthy of it. It is equally conducive to happiness and rectitude to form an honourable attachment of that kind. The human heart is formed for love; and love and friendship are among those efficacious causes which the goodness of the Divine Being hath still left on earth to humanize the soul, and soften the asperities of life. In that connection be sincere. If you have made your choice with deliberation, abide by it. Caprice is at enmity with love. There must be an unbounded confidence and exclusive preference. The heart must be kept free from suspicion, and every wish must beat in unison. It must not be unnoticed, that esteem is the only sure basis of love. Build it upon whatever else you please,—on youth, on beauty, on wealth, on affability of temper, on diligence, on assiduity,—all will fail but virtue; and the fondest affection by degrees will sink into indifference, carelessness, aversion, and perhaps hatred. Just views of God, a conduct regulated by them, the temper of the heart softened by Divine influence, supreme love to the Author of all our benefits, a calm, tranquil confidence in his mercy and guidance through the promise of his Son, and a constant endeavour to approve yourselves to him in all the public and private walks of life: these will make you respectable to each other; you will reflect with pleasure upon the commencement of your acquaintance, you will bless the Providence which has made you the sharers of each other's griefs and joys; and, after having filled up the offices of life, you will find your friendship and love made perfect in a better and heavenly state. I feel much interested in your welfare. May the gracious Being who superintends the affairs of his unworthy creatures guide you by his counsel, and distinguish your future lives with the communication of every necessary blessing of life and salvation. Present my sincere respects to your unknown. My most affectionate remembrances to the whole family. We hope soon to see Miss Rebecca. A sight of any of you always yields me the greatest pleasure.

The following lines have been preserved in the family of the Faulkners, as the composition of Mr. Watson; but at what time they were written we are not informed. They appear to have been designed for a Sunday school anniversary. The writer possessed the true poetic genius; but did not study poetry as an art. Some of the lines are too long, and others too short; and in one instance the rhyme is false; but, altogether, the piece is worth preserving.

HAIL, heaven-born charity! to thee we bring
The choral voice, and consecrated string,
Nor blush thy praise to tell, thy acts to show,
Though different themes in worldly bosoms glow.
Let them the warrior's deeds with transport trace,
And sing war's triumphs with unblushing face,
Wake its dire passions into life again,
Dance over seas of blood, and shout o'er millions slain;
Or haste to pleasure's shrine, and festive raise
Their noisy pæans and alluring lays;
To silence warning conscience raise their breath,
And strew with gaudy flowers the way to death.

Our theme is charity. From heaven she sprung,
Long ere this earth in sable ether hung,
Adored by angels in the realms above,
Image of God,—for God himself is love.
When this fair globe, at Heaven's supreme command,
From nothing rose, and own'd his powerful hand,
Her mystic influence spread from pole to pole,
And temper'd, form'd, and harmonized the whole;
Hush'd by her voice, the elements repose,
And forth from chaos light and beauty rose.
"Let us make man," the triune Godhead said:
His word is power; he spake, and man was made.
Smiled then fair charity at his behest,
And on the yielding clay her image prest;
There bade her tender amities to glow,
There taught the sympathetic tear to flow;
Justice with pity, love with reason, join'd,
And bade him feel the sorrows of his kind.

When to the skies our rash rebellion rose,
And angry Heaven condemn'd his guilty foes;
When the red lightning from his throne was hurl'd,
To blast in ruin dire a sinful world;
Thou didst from realms of light the Saviour lead,
To bleed, and die, and suffer in our stead.
And, O, he died! love triumph'd, Heaven grew mild,
And God and man by thee were reconciled.
Raised from the grave, by thee his heaven he gains,
And o'er his world redeem'd in mildness reigns,
Joins human sympathies to love Divine,
The Friend, Protector, Patron of mankind;
He rose; but in his flight his mantle fell,
Spirit of love, with us on earth to dwell.
His true disciples catch the' inspiring grace,
In deeds of love their Master's footsteps trace:
No more for sects, and forms, and parties fight,
But prove by charity their faith is right.

Hail, charity Divine! inspiring name,
The children of the poor thy praise proclaim;
Grateful to thee our lisping songs ascend,
Our patron thou; of friendless names the friend.
To thy assiduous, tender care we owe
Teachers, and schools, and benefactors too.
Open'd our mind's bright eye, the shades give way,
And knowledge dawns, and spreads the cheering day
Rescued from vice and ignorance we prove
The strength of piety, the charms of love.

Hail, charity Divine! to thee we bring
The choral voice, and consecrated string.
Hail, charity Divine! to thee we owe
All that on earth can happiness bestow.

On completing his first year in Liverpool, Mr. Watson finished the period of his probation as a minister in the new connection: he therefore attended the conference in Leeds, in the year 1807, when he was admitted into full connection with that body. His brethren showed the estimate which they formed of his character by appointing him the secretary of the conference at the same time. He was also requested to write the annual pastoral address to the societies; from which the following extracts are made. They are at once honourable to the writer, and to the body by which they were adopted.

"Let us, dear brethren, be seriously mindful of the hope of our high calling. If religious concerns be at all important, they are infinitely important; if they are worthy of our attention, they are worthy of our undivided attention; and the man who sits carelessly and at ease in Zion deprives himself of every thing which constitutes real happiness and honour; of every thing which would render him useful to the Church and to the world; of every thing which supports hope, and secures salvation. 'Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast.'

"On the subject of family devotion, so criminally neglected by too many professors of religion in the present day, we would be explicit. In this respect we wish the heads of families in the new connection to be highly exemplary. In every point of view this duty is important.—It is intimately connected with our personal character as Christians; with our influence in society; and more especially with the salvation of our offspring. Behold the children which God hath given you.—They have the strongest claims upon your exertions; they look to you for instruction; they are cast upon your care; and they place you under an awful responsibility. Consecrate, then, your houses to God; rescue these who depend upon your care from the destroyer; devote them by prayer to God; form them by instruction to habits of reflection, and the practice of holiness; and thus share in the praise of Abraham: 'I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.'

"In this age of error and infidelity, when many have wholly denied the faith, and others, from an indifference to truth, have departed from that purity of doctrine which is essential to vital and Scriptural piety, we recommend all our preachers, both circuit and local, closely to study, and earnestly to enforce, the great and distinguishing doctrines of the New Testament. Never treat them lightly; they are the foundations of our faith, and the sources of our comfort. Let the bubbles of opinion, blown up by the breath of vanity, sink unnoticed into their deserved oblivion; but make it your boast and glory, in public and in private, to train up our people in that plain, Scriptural knowledge which uniform experience has proved to be most efficient in its moral effects; and the only instrument in the conversion of men, on which hope can rest with any satisfaction."

Being re-appointed to Liverpool, Mr. Watson returned to that town, where he continued his acceptable ministry, and still exercised himself in literary composition. During this year (1807) he compiled a popular history and description of Liverpool, which was deduced from the large works of Enfield and Aikin, with a considerable portion of original matter. It was published by his friend Mr. Kaye, in a neat pocket volume, and was well received by the natives, and by strangers visiting that great mart of commerce. At the request of the same friend, Mr. Watson also wrote a brief history of the reign of George III., as a continuation of Dr. Goldsmith's "Abridgment of the History of England." It occupies about seventy closely-printed duodecimo pages, and contains some spirited sketches of the characters of eminent individuals, and of public events. The sentiments of the writer throughout are eminently loyal and patriotic; and his anxiety for the national independence and honour, in the tremendous conflict with France and the greater part of Europe then combined against her, is very striking

and apparent. His heart was truly British; and his attachment to George III., and to the favourite ministers of that revered monarch, was strong and decided. Having related some brilliant successes of the English fleet and army, and the death of Nelson, Pitt, and Fox, Mr. Watson thus closes his interesting narrative:—

"Thus at the close of the year 1806, did Britain mingle her triumphs and her afflictions. On the one hand she had seen her navy triumph in every part of the globe; she had extended her colonial possessions, and multiplied the sources of her commerce; from her enemies she had wrested some of their most valuable settlements, and seen her arms triumph over those of the conquerors of the continent, on the plains of Maida. But on the other, some of the ablest directors of her councils, and the brightest ornaments of her senate, were removed by death from her service, and that at a period when the alarming circumstances of the times called most imperiously for the assistance of every thing great and patriotic in man. She was almost entirely excluded from the continent; and nearly the whole of Europe was prostrate at the feet of her natural and implacable enemy and rival. The year 1807 has, however, been ushered in with the dawn of hope. The eyes of the world are fixed upon the eventful contest between the hardy sons of the north, and the legions of an unprincipled but successful usurper. What the event will be, is highly problematical. The occurrences of late years have sported with the penetration of the wisest, and have made it folly to conjecture."

On completing this early publication Mr. Watson addressed the following jeu-d'esprit to his friend Mr. Kaye, at whose request the work was written. The personage mentioned in the first line is the messenger employed by printers in carrying manuscripts and proof sheets to and from authors and editors:—

No longer haunted by your devil,
Though late in dumps, I 'm now grown civil;
And though I boast a patriot's merit,
Nor ranc'rous hate of kings inherit,
With warmest loyalty attended,
I 'm glad the reign of George is ended.
Let no sly Bow-street prowling sinner,
Gaping for treason as he gapes for dinner,
For this one word clap on his fetters,
And take poor author 'fore his betters.
'Tis no complaint of canting faction,
Dyed black in heart, though fair in action;
'Tis not rebellion's exultation,
Degrading prince to raise the nation;
'Tis author's trump of jubilee,
Who, from his pens and papers free,
From parlour close, and subjects bare,
Struts stately forth, and breathes the air;
And, from dull books and thinking free,
Tastes idleness and vacancy.
Yes; George's reign is fully ended,
And sent to press, can't now be mended.
The books of ref'rence sent by you,
Affording news both old and new,
Are in brown paper closely penn'd in,
And you may have them home for sending.

R. W.

The critical situation of Great Britain at this period awakened in Mr. Watson's mind a more than ordinary solicitude. As an humble Methodist preacher, without wealth, connections, or personal influence, he appeared to be incapable of rendering her any essential service. But he had an understanding to comprehend, a heart to feel, and an eloquent and vigorous pen; and he determined, so far as his official duties would permit, to employ these in maintaining her interests and honour. His friend Mr. Kaye resolved on the publication of a weekly newspaper, upon loyal and constitutional principles; and Mr. Watson lent his assistance in its management. The following extracts from the prospectus which was written by him, will show the political principles which he then entertained, and his general views concerning public affairs:—

"In times like the present, when Europe is continually presenting great and alarming political revolutions; when a bold and successful usurper, infatuated with the ambition of universal dominion, extends the rod of his tyranny over the prostrate nations; and when in consequence of his intrigues and conquests, the foreign relations of Great Britain become daily more intricate and embarrassing; every man who has the least stake in his country's welfare must enter warmly into its interests; and if not blinded by party rage, and perverted by political fanaticism, will heartily co-operate in those measures which tend to maintain its dignity, and preserve its independence.

"Serious, however, as are the affairs of Europe, they are not so distressing to reflection as the divided state of politics at home. Britain at one with herself is invulnerable to her enemies; in her resources equal to her wants, and in her energies equal to her contests. It is therefore sincerely to be lamented, that, at the time when unanimity is most pressingly required to employ those resources, and direct those energies, faction should divide our councils, and the rancour of opposition disturb the operations of patriotic virtue. There are critical periods in the history of empires, when every thought should be absorbed in the public safety, and in which division is discomfiture. Philip conquered by the disputes of Athens; and the animosities excited between the patricians and the plebeians brought the Æqui and the Volsci to the gates of Rome.

"Devotedly attached to the person and family of a sovereign who has so long adorned the throne by his virtues, and heartily embracing the principles of the British constitution in Church and state, the publisher scruples not to profess himself an enemy to those measures which would derogate from the dignity of the one, or violate the purity and endanger the existence of the other. Equally opposed to intolerance and to anarchy, he shall feel proud if any attempts of his be successful enough to lead his readers more highly to estimate that mild and paternal government which so fully secures us from both; and more carefully to guard against those delusions which would steal away our great and real privileges under the frail pretence of granting others greater and more valuable.

"Should we even allow the zeal of our modern reformers to be real in its principles, and sincere in its objects, it will not follow that on this account it is less dangerous. No qualities are perhaps more rarely to be found in man than those which are requisite to the task of politi-

cal reform, when even necessary. The time when, and the manner how, will not be readily descried by clamour and violence, by precipitation and pertinacity. The application of the pruning knife to the branch is often relinquished to strike a blow at the root, merely to show the vigour of the arm that wields the exterminating axe.

Melius, peijus, prost, obsit, nil vident nisi quod lubent."

With these views and principles Mr. Watson lent his powerful aid to his friend in the establishment of a journal which exerted no common influence upon the public mind. It was decidedly in favour of the existing administration, and was very extensively read; and appearing in one of the largest and most influential towns in the empire, the assistance which it afforded the government in the protracted and arduous struggle with France and her allies was valuable and efficient. The leading articles were regularly copied into one of the most popular of the London daily papers, and were thus circulated through the kingdom.* That a young man who had never been accustomed to associate with statesmen and senators, and had spent the greater part of his life in comparative obscurity, should have acquired the requisite knowledge for such a service, and the necessary facility in composition, is a striking proof of the energy and resources of his mind; and, indeed, such was his readiness in comprehending any subject to which he directed his attention, and the rapidity with which he expressed himself in writing, that his literary engagements in connection with the Liverpool Courier were in many instances rather a relaxation from severer studies, than an onerous addition to his limited official duties. Public papers are indispensable, as vehicles of intelligence, in a trading community; and when the very existence of the nation was menaced by a mighty and determined enemy, so that almost every post was expected to bring information of the deepest importance, the public prints, of course, commanded almost universal attention; and it must have been a high gratification to Mr. Watson, that he was able to place before so many of his countrymen a record of passing occurrences, connected with a recognition of Divine providence, and in a tone of pure and elevated morality. Men who thus contribute to the knowledge and improvement of society are among its greatest benefactors. Mr. Watson's services in this respect were perfectly voluntary; the spontaneous effusions of personal friendship, and of patriotic and loyal feeling; for through life he was as much distinguished by disinterestedness and generosity, as by the strength of his understanding.

In the midst of his engagements and studies he found time occasionally to correspond with his friends. The following letter shows the kindness of his heart, and his anxiety to turn a painful bereavement to the spiritual benefit of a young friend. It was addressed to Mr. Faulkner, jun.; and is dated, Liverpool, December, 1807.

Dear Sir,—I was affected, but not surprised, to hear of the death of your sister. From events of this kind much good may be derived, however painful they may be to our feelings.

* The paper here referred to was the London Courier, the conductors of which had the meanness, from year to year, to copy the leading articles from the Liverpool journal of the same name, without ever acknowledging the source whence they were derived.

"Smitten friends are messengers of love:
For us they sicken, and for us they die."

The fervent glow of life does but waste the oil of the lamp which sustains its light; and our approaches to vigour and manhood are but approaches to the grave. Few love to think on death. The thought is not pleasing. It cannot, with its melancholy reflections; and it is not necessary that it should constantly occupy our minds. But it is necessary that it should occupy them more than perhaps it does; and the death of friends imperiously forces the subject upon us. The wise consider their latter end, and make it their business to divest its approaches of alarm; and so to live, that the last act of life, the act of dying, may be honourable to their memories, and easy to their minds. "For me to live is Christ," says an apostle, "and to die is gain;" and it is only such a life that can produce such a death. The living faith of a Christian realizes unseen objects, and gives them, even in this world, a present subsistence. Hence his better thoughts repose in heaven; and though he is in the world, he is not of the world. He enters now by faith where Jesus his forerunner is entered; and death only brings him personally into that region in which by faith and love he had his dwelling place before. Two things prepare us either for life or death: an interest in Christ; and a firm and settled intention to please him in our conduct. May they be possessed by you!

"Then when the last, the closing hour draws nigh,
And earth recedes before my swimming eye;
When trembling on the doubtful edge of fate,
I stand, and stretch my views to either state;
Teach me to quit this transitory scene
With decent triumph, and a look serene;
Teach me to fix my ardent hopes on high,
And, having lived to thee, in thee to die."

I have been indisposed from a severe cold. Little Tom is ill of the measles; and Mrs. Watson is very unwell. I write in haste, and have not time to add more. Present my most affectionate remembrance to the whole family.

At the conference of the new connection, held at Huddersfield, in June, 1808, Mr. Watson was a second time appointed secretary to that body. He also wrote the annual address to the societies; from which the following extracts are selected. They show the deep interest which he took in the state of Europe in general, and especially of Great Britain.

"With those of our societies who, from their situation in the manufacturing parts of the country, have been exposed to many severe privations through the unfavourable state of our national commerce, we deeply sympathize. To such we would say, 'In your patience possess ye your souls.' These are truly days of tribulation; but let us never forget the invisible hand which directs the operations of providence.—There is a spirit in the wheels which carry his purposes into execution; and though their movements may appear to us variable and contradictory, they are all regulated by infinite wisdom and goodness.—'Clouds and darkness are round about him; justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne.' The kingdom of Christ will come; hap-

pier days will dawn upon the Church and the world; and though the preparations for this great event may be marked with dispensations of sorrow and sufferings, never will God forget his people. In his bosom they rest, and upon the rock of his Divine love they shall be surely fixed, amidst the awful whirl of human events, and in every storm and revolution of life. Cease not, brethren, to remember the word on which he has caused you to hope: 'All things work together for good to them that love God.'

"But while the present state of the world forcibly directs the attention of the servants of God to the consolation of Israel, as their refuge and help, it ought likewise to impress you with new motives to zeal and exemplary holiness. The judgments of God are the fan in the hand of Christ, by which he purges his Church, and separates the chaff from the wheat. Let every one, therefore, take heed to himself.—Superficial religion affords no succour, no resource in the day of trouble. It cannot fulfil the designs of the Son of God, who hath called us to holiness; and, however it may amuse the conscience, it will still leave us exposed to the fiery indignation which shall devour the wicked.

"We cannot deceive the eye of Omniscience by our pretensions, or recommend ourselves to his favourable regard by our lukewarmness.—'The Lord knoweth them that are his;' and in order to secure the happiness of a saving interest in his favour, let us press after all the mind of Christ, and all the power of piety, that we may escape the fate of the wicked and the hypocrite, and maintain that decision of character in a corrupt world, which will equally honour the religion of our Master, and prove the most effectual instrument in the conversion of our fellow men.

"Let the ministers of Christ be peculiarly impressed with the necessity of great and enlarged exertions in the present circumstances of the age in which we live. You preach under the most impressive circumstances. The judgments of God are abroad in the earth, and they give weight and terror to your ministry. Not only the awful prospects of eternity lend you aid in the conversion of men; but the hand of God is now lifted up over the whole earth. The threatening cloud of his wrath rolls from nation to nation. The lightnings of his anger enlighten the world with their awful glare. Speak, then, and spare not. Weep between the porch and the altar, and cry, 'Spare thy people, O Lord.' Let the sufferings of men, the just recompense of sin, awaken your compassion; and with holy boldness, mixed and tempered with the softest sympathy, employ every power of your nature in spreading a penitential sorrow for sin through the land; that the anger of God may be propitiated, that he may turn his face and shine upon us, that we may be saved.

"Finally, brethren, we commend you to God. May your strength be according to your day. May the Spirit of truth and power go forth with his servants, and his vital presence be felt in all your assemblies. May you have peace in all your borders, and prosperity in your souls."

At this period Mr. Watson's health was so delicate as to render him unable to take his full share of labour in the extensive circuits of the connection to which he belonged: he was therefore returned a third year to Liverpool, where he was, in a great measure, exempted from travelling, and from exposure to the night air. At the same time, his

ministry was characterized by such a richness and variety of matter, that there was no danger lest it should lose its interest with the societies and congregations. The event fully justified the appointment.—During the first year in which he had the pastoral charge of the Liverpool circuit, there was a decrease in the societies under his care of twenty-four members; during the second year there was an increase of two; and in the third year, an increase of sixty-five. His preaching presented strong attractions to people in general, and especially to young persons of education and intelligence; many of whom were often drawn to his chapel by the report of his great intellectual power and impressive eloquence. Not a few of these, who came to hear him from motives of curiosity, often quailed in his presence, and turned pale under his affecting appeals to the conscience on the all-important subject of personal religion. Christianity they perceived to be, not a matter of opinion and speculation, but a revelation of mercy to sinners, whose everlasting happiness is suspended upon their believing acceptance of it; and they saw that Mr. Watson's preaching was not intended to gratify a sickly sentimentality, or to afford amusement to loungers; but to bring men to repentance, and to turn them effectually from sin and the world to God and holiness. The sanctions of the Gospel, derived from judgment and eternity, appeared in all their awfulness and certainty in the ministry which they had been induced to attend; the misery of lost spirits was described in all its intensity; and the manner in which triflers were admonished to flee from the wrath to come, and to apply to Christ for salvation, in many instances produced impressions the most salutary and permanent. Among others, the late Rev. John James derived great benefit from Mr. Watson's ministry, during his appointment to Liverpool.

Mr. Watson continued to cherish a lively concern for the national welfare; and in the course of this year (1808) he produced a political pamphlet, which excited considerable attention, in reply to Mr. Roscoe. This gentleman was connected with a large banking establishment in Liverpool, and had recently represented that borough in parliament. He was distinguished as a philanthropist, an elegant scholar, and a patron of the fine arts; and his connections, as a public man, were extensive and powerful. In politics he identified himself with that party in the state who, during the war with revolutionary France, were perpetually prophesying evil against this country, attempting to embarrass the government, and recommending the nation to crouch to Napoleon Bonaparte. With this design he published a pamphlet, which quickly passed through several editions, entitled, "Considerations on the Causes, Objects, and Consequences of the present War, and on the Expediency or the Danger of Peace with France."

With the assumptions, the reasonings, and the design of this publication Mr. Watson held no sympathy; and as he thought its tendency to be mischievous, he entered the lists against this popular and accomplished writer, and produced "A Letter to William Roscoe, Esq., containing Strictures on his late Publication." This is a very able production. It is written with great force of argument, and in a strain of powerful and commanding eloquence, and made a considerable impression upon the public mind. The author has decidedly the advantage over his antagonist throughout the discussion, and shows a deep con-

cern for the honour and welfare of his country. The opening and concluding paragraphs will exhibit Mr. Watson's manner of writing, and the views which he entertained concerning the question at issue.

"War is an evil of such magnitude, involves so many scenes of individual and national calamity, and is so repulsive to every enlightened and liberal feeling, that those who either inflict it without cause, or continue it beyond the demands of necessity, equally deserve the execrations of mankind. As it is the *last reason*, so it ought to be the *last resort*, of kings. No means should be left untried to preserve the relations of amity, so essential to the vital interests of all countries without exception, and no opportunity favourable to the return of peace (the best of human blessings) ought to pass by without regard. A power, originally injured, if it refuse reasonable and safe terms of conciliation, becomes equally guilty with the first aggressor, and changes its relations. What was at first an act of defensive resistance, then becomes an act of unjustifiable offensive encroachment.

"Feeling the impression of these truths upon my own convictions, I should have gone with you to the full length of those pacific sentiments contained in your pamphlet, had they stood in the simple and commanding majesty of truth, wholly disconnected with the rancour of party, and the perversions of prejudice. He must, however, have read your performance with little attention, who does not perceive that, while you contend for peace with foreign powers, you do it in the spirit of domestic hostility; and that your opinions are supported by facts exaggerated on the one part, and either falsely coloured, or wholly suppressed on the other. These, sir, I hope to prove in the sequel are not unfounded allegations; and though I respect your virtues, and admire your talents, I shall not be deterred by either from pursuing the tract of fair, manly inquiry into the real merits of your political labours, though it may be at the expense of the exposure of the fallacy of your arguments, and the deficiency of your candour.

"You have observed in your preface, 'that the honour of the nation is the honour of the people, and the disgrace of the nation their disgrace.' On this ground, sir, I meet you. I feel interested in the honour of my country: I should blush at her disgrace: and it is because I think that you have libelled her character; because you have assimilated yourself to those hireling editors of the French and German papers, whose daily effort is to degrade her in the eyes of Europe; and because the whole tendency of your pamphlet is to produce distrust and create alarm, and by paralyzing the energies of the people in the present contest for all that renders political existence valuable, the independence of the country, is defeating its own object, the accomplishment of a speedy peace; it is, sir, I say, for these reasons that I become your opponent. Your name, it is true, may give a sanction to your opinions; that advantage will be wholly in your favour; but the true merits of the question are not to be thus determined, nor truth confounded and driven from the field by the 'whistling of a name.'"

"You have told us repeatedly that since the separation of Russia from our interests, 'all the motives which were urged for the prosecution of the war have ceased to operate; and that we are now left without an ally, without an object, and without a cause.' If so, it is certainly high time to turn our thoughts to the termination of a worse than

useless struggle, and to employ ourselves in something more rational than a contest which has neither motive nor object. The late ministry, by their neglect of Russia, it is true, have left us without an *ally* of importance; but the consequences of their misconduct have not been so fortunate in leaving us quite destitute of a *cause*. The defeat of the Russian arms, and the disgust produced in the mind of the Russian emperor by the conduct of the British ministers, in withholding their co-operation in the arduous contest in which he had been engaged, threw our most valuable ally into the arms of France. From that moment the principle of the war changed. France and Russia both joined in the same cause; and the object of that coalition was to attack, and force us to renounce our maritime rights. To defend these has hitherto been the immediate object of the war since that time; for what is the object of the enemy to destroy, is certainly our object to defend, and to preserve. The negotiations Bonaparte has held out to us since that time have been therefore for a 'maritime peace;" that is, a peace in which we shall renounce all interference and connection with the continent of Europe, and render our naval rights and ancient maritime jurisprudence, the firmest bulwark of our safety and prosperity, the subject of discussion and infringement. This, then, is the kind of peace Bonaparte offers us; and these are the principles on which we must commence a negotiation, if we commence it now. It remains then for you, who wish an immediate peace, and who blame ministers for not conconcluding one, to say whether we shall take it on these conditions. No, sir; we will not accept this *basis;* we will not suffer our naval superiority, the most precious gift of Providence, the most valuable legacy of our ancestors, and which has been confirmed to us by the valour of our contemporaries who have fought and died in our defence, to be made the subject of negotiation for a moment. Thank God, if we be true to ourselves, we can support the contest. While our navy stands unshaken amidst the wreck of nations, our trade will not only be protected, but enlarged. Difficulties only call forth the resources of a great people; and the resources of England are not exhausted. She still possesses an extensive commerce; and her capital, her industry, and her enterprise must finally break down the barriers which are opposed to her prosperity. Bonaparte knows this, and he fears it; and if he cannot succeed in enervating us by disunion, he is evidently prepared to acknowledge those rights, against which he so loudly declaims, and which we for that reason ought as strenuously to defend. This, sir, is the glorious *object* of the present struggle; it is the object we are called upon, by every consideration of justice, honour, and interest, to defend. It is dear to us as the soil on which we tread, as the constitution under which we live. It is the only guarantee of our independence, and the only sure pledge of our future commercial prosperity. If the sea cannot be our empire, let it be our grave. 'This is the true position, this is the high destiny of our country; and nothing but a political suicide, a total incapacity to meet the bounties of Providence and to improve its blessings, can induce us to hesitate, for a moment, as to the course we ought to pursue.'"

The generality of pious people are apt to consider political discussions absolutely incompatible with the sacred office; and therefore regard with suspicion every minister of Christ who devotes any portion

of his time to writing on subjects of this nature, as if he either neglected his proper duties, or indulged a secular spirit. To a considerable extent, this prejudice is well founded; yet there are cases in which Christian ministers may interpose their opinions on measures adopted by the civil power without any dereliction of duty. Many acts both of legislation and government are intimately connected with questions of morality and religion; and the public conscience looks for the advice and guidance of the men whose office it is to interpret the will of the Almighty. When the ministers of religion set themselves in opposition to legitimate and constitutional governments, and engage in plans of civil disorganization and strife, they merit the severest reprehension; but when they lend their aid in support of just authority and social order, they act in perfect accordance with the example of their Lord and of his inspired servants. Mr. Wesley published several pamphlets on political affairs, especially during the American war; and his friend Mr. Fletcher followed his example: but who regards the founder of Methodism as having neglected the spiritual interests of mankind; or thinks that the devout vicar of Madeley lost any of his spirituality of mind by writing his "Vindication of Mr. Wesley's Calm Address," "American Patriotism," and the "Bible and the Sword?" When these distinguished ministers wrote in support of the measures of government, during the war of American independence, the object proposed in the struggle was merely the preservation of colonies; whereas the war with France was designed to preserve nothing less than our national existence and independence. The tyrant of the continent was said to have offered to a licentious soldiery the plunder of England as the reward of its subjugation. Against the combined power of Europe, however, this country successfully maintained the contest, fierce and tremendous as it was; until at length the menaces of the enemy abroad, and the predictions which were so loudly uttered by the prophets of evil at home, were alike falsified; and not only was Great Britain with her colonies preserved, but the war ended in such a manner as to leave the national honour unstained. To this day our country stands, the envy and admiration of the world, as the land of liberty and commerce, the benefactress of the human race. Her influence and means of usefulness are unbounded. On the retrospect of the part which he had taken at the period in question, Mr. Watson could cherish no feelings but those of satisfaction; for his was a heart at once loyal and patriotic, and whatever related to the national honour and welfare concerned him. In reference to his political writings his general remark was,—and it was often repeated to his friend Mr. Kaye, —"I wish to assist in bearing up the heart of the nation under the pressure of its burdens and dangers." It does not, however, follow, that because a man so gifted as Mr. Watson rendered a valuable service to the country under very peculiar circumstances, and was able to do this without neglecting his proper duties as a Christian minister, that every officious meddler would be justified in obtruding his opinions upon the world whenever he might feel a desire to see his name in print. The public conduct of such men as Messrs. Wesley, Fletcher, and Watson, is no rule to persons of ordinary capacity and attainments.

CHAPTER V.

Failure of Mr. Watson's health—Returned to Liverpool as a Supernumerary—Letter to Mr. John Faulkner—Writes Verses entitled "Enjoyments"—Memoir of the Rev. James Parry—Mr. Watson's views of Church Government—The Rev. Robert Nicholson—Providential Escape—Appointed to the Manchester Circuit—Publishes a Letter on Lord Sidmouth's Bill—Character of that Measure—Failure of Mr. Watson's health—Retirement from the Methodist New Connection—Returns to Liverpool—Unites himself to the Wesleyan Body—Letters to Mr. Absalom Watkin.

At the conference held in May, 1809, Mr. Watson was returned to Liverpool as a supernumerary preacher. Three years before he had complained in one of his letters, that his lungs were affected; and that the manner in which they laboured appeared to him "prophetic of their end." The painful symptoms, however, at that time subsided, and he continued his public labours, though with many intervals of serious indisposition; but now the symptoms returned, and presented a more alarming appearance. It seemed indeed as if his days were numbered, and his life and labours were hastening to a close. The blood oozed from his lungs, and he was compelled for some time almost entirely to suspend the work of preaching. The following letter, which was written at the commencement of the winter, describes the state of his health, and gives an interesting view of the religious principles to which his attention was directed in the time of affliction, and which afforded him consolation and support. The religion which was his strength and portion he earnestly recommends to his young friend.

To Mr. John Faulkner, of Manchester.

Liverpool, Nov. 23d, 1809.

My Dear Friend,—I take the first opportunity to answer your friendly epistle. With respect to my health I continue in a very precarious state. I am not wholly free from the spitting of blood, and have almost constant pain in my breast. I at present preach little; and with difficulty perform that share of duty; but I feel that all things are most wisely ordered by a kind and gracious Providence; and rest with full confidence upon this great truth, that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

To the great Source of all good let me recommend you. What is the world without God? What are even its highest pleasures? And what, then, its frowns? True, vital religion has always been regarded by me as equally essential to the happiness of this life, as to that of the next; and therefore we much injure ourselves when we would put off its enjoyments to some future period of life, or perhaps to its last gasping moments. For why should we be unhappy so long, when happiness is now within our reach? What is religion, but love to the best of beings; confidence in the most faithful of beings; and friendship with the greatest of beings?—to meditate with pleasure on his infinite wonders of nature and of operation; to have liberty to approach that throne of glory before which angels bow with reverence and rapture; to be under the eye and guidance of his superintending wisdom; and to be filled with the spirit of light, peace, and sanctity? Our noblest employment, the best plan of spending life, is to do all with a view to his

glory; to rise in the morning and direct our voice to Him, and look up; to lie down with thanksgiving; to perform the duties of life as the assignments of his providence; and to embrace opportunities to consult his holy word, and think of his goodness.

Present my affectionate remembrance to Mrs. Faulkner. May you walk together in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Consecrate your house to God in prayer, and the blessing of God will light upon your tabernacle. Present my kindest respects to your whole family.

The same grateful and happy spirit which breathes through this beautiful letter, Mr. Watson expressed in the following poem, which he wrote a few weeks afterward. It is a parody upon some querulous verses, entitled, "Such things were," and beginning,

"Scenes of my youth, ye once were dear."

They were repeated to him by Mrs. Kaye's sister, in one of their social interviews; when he acknowledged the elegance and spirit with which they were spoken, and said he would endeavour to produce something more worthy of her powers of recital. The result was the composition of these stanzas:—

ENJOYMENTS; OR, SUCH THINGS ARE.

WHILE o'er the various scenes of joy
I gaze with ever-raptured eye,
What though my bliss has felt alloy,
And oft I 've seen my pleasure die;
No chilling look pale sorrow flings
On what kind Heaven doth still bestow,
My moments fly on downy wings,
My joys in even current flow:
Grateful to Heaven, I banish care,
While I remember SUCH THINGS ARE.

What though I hear no father speak,
Nor set before me wisdom's prize;
What though no tear bedews my cheek,
Warm from a mother's beaming eyes;
Firm in affection's primal ties,
Their lessons to my soul I bind:
Their bright example never dies,
Their mantle they have left behind:
From heaven they smile away my care,
While I remember SUCH THINGS ARE.

'Tis here in calm and tranquil rest,
Far from the world's contempt and guile,
Up to my highest wishes blest,
With glowing friendship's open smile;
While others, hapless, doom'd to roam,
And brave the fury of the seas,
Mine are the pleasures of a home,
Domestic joys, and heart at ease,
With friends my joys and griefs to share,
While I remember SUCH THINGS ARE.

'Twas here, e'en in this bloomy grove,
I first met Laura's tender eye;
That eye which speaks the soul of love;
That heart where all the virtues lie:

But now I call the fair one mine,
My friend, companion, and my wife;
While all affection's arts combine,
Each to support and bless through life:
Partner in every joy and care,
I must remember SUCH THINGS ARE.

Smiling my morn of life arose,
Gay, guiltless pleasure led the hours;
Sudden behold the prospect close,
On all the cloud of sickness lowers;
But from the skies a streaming light
In brightness breaks above the sun;
Rises gay hope to meet the sight,
And sorrow's sable night is gone:
A smiling God my griefs to bear,
To whom I owe that SUCH THINGS ARE.

Liverpool, Jan. 6th, 1810. W.

Mr. Watson's next literary performance was a short biographical account of the Rev. James Parry, a minister in the Methodist new connection; and a young man of very superior talents and piety. It was inserted in the Magazine of that body, in the months of July and August, 1810; and consists mostly of letters written by the deceased. The following remarks on the subject of a Divine call to the Christian ministry, which Mr. Watson has introduced into this memoir, are equally just and striking:—"I am not in possession of the exact time when Mr. Parry began to preach; but in the year 1803, he was engaged as a temporary supply in Chester. A strong desire to be engaged in the greatest and most noble work on earth, the administration of the word of life to a guilty world, appears to have operated in his heart from a very early period of his Christian life. This might arise from a warm benevolence of soul, a sympathy for the misery of man, a disposition which is both the foundation and the top stone of ministerial qualifications, and which afterward shone conspicuously in his character. But it would be too cold, it would lean too much to those systems of modern divinity, half philosophized into deism, and disgustingly protruded into the world under the appellation of rational Christianity, to trace the feeling to no higher a source than native benevolence. He who assigns the bounds of his habitation to every individual by the dispositions of a universal Providence, cannot be supposed to have no concern or part in the appointment of his own ministers. A bent, a disposition of mind to those serious engagements is often felt long before the future ambassador of God possesses full qualifications for the office: and these may be wisely designed to turn the attention to the contemplation of its duties, and its awful responsibility; and to induce to a preparatory course of devotion and study, calculated to insure the sanction of the Church, and to promote future stability and usefulness. In this manner did our young friend, like Samuel, receive some early intimations of his future designation by God; and, like him he felt the willing mind which answered the intimation by a ready and humble acquiescence."

During the year which Mr. Watson spent as a supernumerary in Liverpool, the Rev. Robert Nicholson was his colleague, and lived in his family. His kindness and generosity to this excellent young

man were unbounded. He assisted him in his studies; preached for him when he was able; allowed him the use of his library, and of his manuscripts, and gave him permission to copy what he pleased from them; and at the same time he admitted him to his personal confidence. He gave Mr. Nicholson an account of his early life; and declared his deep regret that he had ever left the Wesleyan connection. The concessions which were made by the conference in the year 1797, he thought had removed all ground of just complaint, in regard to the administration of Methodist discipline; and that, therefore, the division which was made in the following year, when the new connection was formed, was unnecessary, and consequently unjustifiable. The practical workings of the two systems of ecclesiastical order he had now witnessed; and he gave a decided preference to that of the Wesleyan body, as being in his judgment attended with more beneficial results, and as coming nearer to the New Testament plan. In these views Mr. Nicholson concurred; and two years after he left the Methodist new connection, and offered himself to the Wesleyan conference, by whom he was received as a fellow labourer. When he was stationed with Mr. Watson, and they ingenuously disclosed to each other their opinions and feelings, he suggested to his gifted colleague that he should offer himself again to his old friends; but Mr. Watson replied that his infirm state of health, the circumstances connected with his former retirement from the work, and the fact of his having a family, all rendered it improbable that such an offer would be accepted; he thought it better, therefore, for the present at least, to remain in the new connection, and to wait till the providence of God should more distinctly point out to him the path of duty. In the meantime he made no attempts to disturb the peace of the societies by any disclosure to them of his private sentiments, but did every thing in his power to promote their edification and prosperity. In the conference, however, and in his intercourse with his brethren the preachers, he did what he could to promote a spirit of moderation, and to neutralize the unhallowed effects of the division.

Comparative cessation from the labours of the pulpit was greatly beneficial to his health; and at length he was able to resume his ministry. He preached a course of sermons on the attributes of God, and a series of lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews; both of which were highly admired, and rendered very profitable to his hearers. According to Mr. Nicholson's account, Mr. Watson was not accustomed, at this period, to write largely with a reference to the pulpit. He seldom committed to paper more than a very concise outline of his discourses before their delivery, and often nothing at all. Yet his sermons were never rhapsodical and incoherent; but were well studied and arranged in his own mind. He generally prepared for the pulpit while pacing backward and forward in his room; and in this manner he was often employed for several hours together, absorbed in intense thought, his intelligent and expressive countenance varying with the deeply-interesting subjects which passed successively through his mind. On one occasion especially, during this year, he gave a striking proof of his great powers as a preacher, and of the readiness with which he could meet any emergency in the course of his ministrations. While he was in the chapel attending the worship of God on a Sunday morning, the

steeple of a neighbouring church fell with a tremendous crash upon the congregation, and many lives were lost. He was deeply affected with this catastrophe; and his impressions were strengthened by the circumstance, that, not many minutes before it fell, he had walked close by this building on his way to the chapel, unconscious of danger. Believing, on the testimony of his Saviour, that the very hairs of his head were all numbered, he had not learned to inquire in the language of infidel philosophy,

> "When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
> Shall gravitation cease if you go by?
> Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,
> For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall?"

He therefore attributed his preservation to that Divine interference without which not even a sparrow falls to the ground. As the time of the evening service advanced, Mr. Nicholson expressed a wish that Mr. Watson would address the congregation; and remarked that Luke xiii, 4, 5, would form a very appropriate subject of discourse: "Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Mr. Watson acceded to the proposal; and, with scarcely any time for premeditation, delivered to a crowded assembly one of the greatest and most impressive sermons ever heard from his lips. The fact is, that he possessed such a fulness of information on every subject connected with divinity, his thoughts flowed in such exact order, and he could command such a copiousness and power of expression, that he was almost constantly prepared to preach on any occasion, however peculiar and difficult.

As the spring and summer advanced Mr. Watson's health continued to improve; so that he was enabled with tolerable frequency to resume his labours in the pulpit; and at the conference which was held in June, he was appointed again to the Manchester circuit, after an interval of four years. In the meanwhile the circuit had been divided, so as to be confined within narrower limits, and to be more suited to the strength of a comparative invalid, than when he was last stationed there. In Manchester he was cordially received by his former friends, who were strongly attached to him because of his sociable qualities, and his extraordinary abilities as a preacher, now greatly improved by increased knowledge and piety. Here, as well as in Liverpool, several individuals belonging to the Wesleyan connection often availed themselves of his ministry, which they warmly admired. It was marked by such intelligence and originality, such a grasp of thought, such power of argument and persuasion, and was withal so evangelical and devotional, as to render it exceedingly attractive and edifying to such pious persons as were distinguished by taste and knowledge; yet his congregations in general were not large, nor was he remarkably successful in the conversion of sinners to God. To him this was often a ground of painful discouragement. He cherished an intense desire to be useful; he prayed without ceasing, and laboured with all his might to turn men from the power of Satan to God; and often expressed his strong regret, in conversation with his intimate friends, that he saw so little fruit of his ministry. Some, however, were brought by his instrumentality to

a serious concern for their spiritual interests; and were led anxiously to inquire, "What must we do to be saved?"

A friend who regularly attended Mr. Watson's ministry at this period says, "His preaching was peculiarly grand and prophetic. He seemed to look forward to the future success of the Gospel with the most triumphant confidence. There was something eminently panoramic and military in the scenes which he drew, and the figures he employed to illustrate the events which should hereafter occur, in regard to the destruction of Christ's enemies, and the spread and influence of his truth. I well recollect his delivering a series of discourses from Hebrews xii, 18–24, which were highly interesting to me at the time. I believe the course consisted of seven or eight sermons. His stated congregation was small, and did not generally appear duly to appreciate the unparalleled excellence of his discourses."

Mr. Watson was not satisfied with delivering the stated number of sermons required of him; though those sermons were such as few men beside himself could preach. He was anxious that the people to whom he ministered should understand the Scriptures; and as he had addressed a course of lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews to his congregation at Liverpool, so he delivered a similar course, on the week day evenings, upon the Epistle to the Ephesians, in a small chapel at Pendleton, near Manchester, to the great pleasure and edification of his hearers. His capacious mind delighted to contemplate the truths of Divine revelation, in all their richness and amplitude; and the doctrinal epistles of St. Paul were exactly suited to his genius, and afforded full scope for the exercise of his judgment and imagination.

Reference has already been made to Mr. Watson's loyalty, and his confidence in the existing administration, to which he was very sincerely attached; but his regard for the person and government of the sovereign, strong and decided as it was, did not render him indifferent to the liberty and rights of the subject. When these were endangered, he was among the first to raise the warning voice. Under the laws of religious toleration, passed in the reign of William and Mary, the persecuting propensities of violent men were restrained, the public tranquillity was secured, and religion had taken a firmer hold upon the lower and middling classes of society than at any former period of the national existence. In the year 1811 an attempt was made to innovate upon the toleration laws, and seriously to abridge the religious liberty of a large portion of the community. The plan was laid with consummate art; and for a season no serious evil was suspected, even by the men from whom it was intended to wrest their best and dearest rights. By the act of William and Mary all Protestant teachers of religion who took the prescribed oaths were placed under the protection of law in their public ministrations; and it was rendered imperative upon the magistrate to administer the oaths whenever the parties made application for that purpose. The alteration intended was that of demanding, from every one who required a license to preach, a certificate signed by "six substantial and reputable householders," specifying his competency and character. The ostensible reasons for this change were, that the ignorant and unwary might be guarded against the arts of designing men, and that the dissenting ministry might be rendered more respecta-

ble; but the real design was, to invest the magistracy with the power of refusing licenses at their option: for the terms "reputable" and "substantial," applied to the "householders" by whom all applicants for licences were to be recommended, were so vague and indefinite, that such magistrates as were unfriendly to dissenters could never be at a loss for a pretext to justify their refusal to administer the oaths whenever they pleased. The magistrate was not made the direct judge of the minister who appeared before him; but he was made the judge of the property and character of the certifying "householders;" and this circumstance gave him the power to harass and annoy, to an unlimited extent, all the ministers who wished to enjoy the benefit of the act of toleration. At the same time, such persons as were not "householders,"—those who were poor, and therefore not "substantial,"—and all who had formerly been immoral in their lives, or who might be deemed fanatical, and therefore not "reputable,"—were to be at once cut off from all hope of obtaining such a ministry as they conscientiously preferred, unless it were in accordance with the views of the magistrate, or secured to them by persons placed in more favourable circumstances than their own.

This measure was brought into parliament by Lord Viscount Sidmouth, and in the first instance met with considerable encouragement. It does not appear that his lordship had any evil design in this measure, or fully perceived its practical bearing. He seems rather to have been urged on by others, and to have been deceived by some dissenters with whom he conversed, and who, like himself, did not see the real character and design of the project.

While this matter was pending, Mr. Watson's acquaintance with the Rev. Jabez Bunting commenced. They had both been preaching at Stockport one Sunday, and met on their way to Manchester in the evening; when Lord Sidmouth's bill became the principal subject of conversation. They both acknowledged, that, if this bill were to pass into a law, it would be ruinous to the Methodists, whose ministry is itinerant; and that it would be very injurious in its operation upon the dissenters generally. The meeting of these two eminent men appeared to be casual; but subsequent events proved it to be one of those providential arrangements which forcibly impress every devout and observant mind. Their interview led to a pure and lasting friendship, from which great advantage was derived, both to themselves, and to the cause of religion. Little did they then imagine that, in future years, they should be successfully associated together in plans of extensive usefulness, and especially in the furtherance of the missionary cause. At Mr. Bunting's request, Mr. Watson immediately wrote the following letter, which appeared in the "Manchester Exchange Herald," of May 23d, 1811. It is worth preserving, for the excellent sentiments it contains, as well as a specimen of his elegant and forcible diction at that period of his life. In assuming the name of "A Protestant Dissenter," he used that term in its popular sense, as the designation of one who was not in immediate connection with the established Church; not that he had any conscientious objections against a religious establishment, as such, as he distinctly declares, or any scruples as to the lawfulness of uniting in the public services of the Church of England.—At that time the dissenters were not duly alive to the evils with which

this measure was fraught; and a strong statement of the case was deemed necessary to rouse their opposition.

To the Protestant Dissenters of Manchester and its vicinity.

GENTLEMEN,—A bill having been brought into parliament by Lord Viscount Sidmouth, for the ostensible purpose of explaining and amending the act of toleration, but which, in reality, infringes that important statute, both in its principle and application, your interest and rights, the welfare of your respective Churches, the purity of your characters, and every motive which can influence the man or the Protestant, demand your deepest attention to so bold and sweeping an incursion upon the religious freedom you have so long and so peaceably enjoyed.

The partial manner in which this bill was explained by his lordship, both in private communications, and at its first reading in the house of lords, prevented an earlier opposition. It is, however, now before us; and the most cursory perusal is sufficient to show that no measure short of the absolute repeal of the act of toleration itself could demand on the part of the dissenters so strong and decided a resistance.

Had his lordship contented himself with his *professed* object, namely, to prevent impositions upon the quarter sessions, and the abuse of licenses, in obtaining exemptions from civil offices by persons not wholly devoted to the ministry, no material objection could have been urged against the bill, except that his lordship had not made out a case sufficiently strong to warrant the legislative interference. Yet this alone was first understood to be his object. A deputation who waited upon his lordship so understood him; and on this ground, as they had nothing to urge against a measure so limited, his lordship might fairly state in the house of lords, that some of the most eminent dissenters, with whom he had conferred, had made no objection to his bill. The fact is, they knew not its extent. They might see little to object in requiring six householders to certify that the person applying for a license was *bona fide* a preacher, and an approved person; but the printed bill materially alters the case, when it requires these six householders to be *substantial* and *reputable* persons; for as these terms convey no positive and specific idea, and as the magistrate alone must be judge, where is the security that numberless vexatious exceptions may not be taken, and that the obtaining of a license, especially from a bench of clerical justices, may not become an affair of the utmost trouble and difficulty. No dissenter could agree to this; and much less could he allow, with the bill, the right of the civil magistrate to fix the time for which the candidate for a license must be known to those who attest his character, because this would be to allow a civil interference in the appointment of ministers, and to give up an essential and fundamental principle of dissent.

Vexatious, however, as the proposed mode of obtaining licenses would be, as it would render every candidate the sport of caprice or bigotry; and degrading as are the formal and solemn provisions of Lord Sidmouth's bill against collusion, as though the dissenting ministers were men of such deep design and ability in fraud, that oaths, declarations, and witnesses must fence them on every side: bad as the bill is in these repects, we have not yet reached the apex of injury and

folly. It absolutely repeals a number of the provisions of the toleration act, in relation to the great body of itinerant dissenting ministers, and renders them liable to the ballot, and all parochial offices. It goes to destroy the very existence of a large and useful class of subordinate teachers, who, though engaged in business, devote the Sabbath to the supply of different congregations, and to the general religious instruction of their fellow creatures; inasmuch as it is not possible, under this bill, for them to obtain a license by any means. It must rekindle the flames of persecution, for conscience would, in many cases, compel them to disobey the law, were it to take effect; and we should behold, even in this age of freedom and liberality, our prisons filled with the victims of an incautious aggression upon the rights of conscience. Nor is this the extent of the injury. It also violates the rights of property; because many places of worship, especially those belonging to the Wesleyan Methodists, being deprived of their present supply of ministers, must lose their value, and sink with the whole weight of their respective debts upon the shoulders of the trustees.

Against a bill fraught with evils of this magnitude, it is highly requisite that, without delay, we should resort to our constitutional right of petitioning. Its injuries are not greater than its follies; but follies are dangerous. The veriest novice in politics, a lad just started out of his minority, could scarcely, in his haste to distinguish himself as a politician, have stumbled upon an idea so mischievous; upon a measure whose direct tendency is to inflame religious animosity, at a time when the body politic ought to be compacted together in the strongest bonds, and animated with one spirit of fraternity and patriotism. If any thing can add to the folly, it is, that this attempt to curtail the rights of Protestant dissenters is made at a time when the demands of the Catholics are urged in so loud a tone, and are acquiring so extensive a support. If such hopes are held out to the Catholics, must the Protestant dissenters be driven out of the pale of the constitution, harassed and degraded? Have we refrained from urging claims, as substantial, surely, as those of the Catholics, from teazing the government from year to year, from the menace and activity of factious restlessness,—only to have our moderation construed into cowardice and tameness? only to encourage the enemies of our privileges, and the enviers of our growing prosperity, to make an experiment upon our patience? And are we to learn from Lord Sidmouth's conduct, that the only means of maintaining our lowest privileges is to urge the highest claims with petulance and audacity? Will the ministry thank him for the hint he has given us?

But "the Church is in danger." This, I suppose, is the true source of the bill; and for this very reason we ought to petition, and in our petitions to show that from whatever quarter the Church is endangered, it is not endangered from Protestant dissenters. We are no enemies of the Church. We respect an establishment whose annals are adorned with the records of martyrs, confessors, witnesses, venerable names of piety and learning. The veriest bigot among us would leap with rapture to hear of her pulpits being filled with men of the same spirit as the compilers of her liturgy, and the writers of her articles. But the Church *is* in danger. It is in danger from infidelity, from luxury, from the vices of a pampered state of society, from the sloth and immorality, the gross immorality of many of her ministers. Here is the true dan-

ger of the Church. But it is much more convenient for pluralists and non-residents, men who are determined neither to amend their doctrines nor their lives, to persuade Lord Sidmouth that it is not they themselves who drive the people from the Church, but that dissenters seduce them.

Those of you, gentlemen, who have had the opportunity of perusing the bill in question, need not be told that it is necessary for the dissenters of this town to make an immediate application to parliament to prevent it from passing into law. On that subject there is no difference of opinion. Suffer me, however, to press the necessity of prompt exertions. The bill has been read a second time; and if it is not stifled in the house of lords, the chance of its passing the commons is increased. A general meeting is certainly the most eligible mode of procedure, in order to frame resolutions expressive of our opinions, and to propose a form of petition. To-morrow, at farthest, ought to be fixed on as the day of meeting, that the petitions may lie in the different places of worship on the Sunday following for signatures.

Let us petition; and let us petition in a manly spirit. Let us go to the house of peers, and tell Lord Sidmouth that we love our venerable sovereign as fervently as any of his subjects; that we are as constitutional in our politics as his lordship himself; that, so far from deserving the frowns of the legislature, we merit its encouragement; that, but for the efforts of dissenters, the lowest classes in many manufacturing districts would have sunk into intellectual and religious barbarism; that in sobriety, industry, loyalty, benevolence, and every character of men, Christians, and patriots, the Protestant dissenters will yield the palm of preference to none; that they have ever been thankful for their privileges, and in no circumstances have abused them; and that, for the legislature to curtail them, under such circumstances, would be to inflict a punishment where no crime is alleged.

A Protestant Dissenter.

What effect this letter produced upon the persons to whom it was immediately addressed, we know not; but the sound and practical view of the subject which Mr. Watson entertained was taken by the leading members of the Methodist and dissenting bodies, who called upon their respective communities throughout the kingdom to petition the legislature against this most obnoxious bill. In a few days the nation was in a ferment. Petitions in unexampled numbers were poured into parliament; and the authors of the measure were glad to withdraw it from the public attention, alleging that their designs were misunderstood. Some eminent personages in the established Church, with a most honourable liberality, expressed their disapprobation of the measure, when its real character was ascertained; and the archbishop of Canterbury delivered an admirable speech in the house of lords in favour of religious toleration; in which he also advised Lord Sidmouth to withdraw the obnoxious measure then before parliament. It is a natural consequence of such injudicious attempts at legislation, that they promote the cause which they are meant to suppress. The attention of those classes of his majesty's subjects who enjoyed the benefit of the act of toleration was directed to that important statute; and it was found to be inadequate to meet the exigencies of the times. Application was therefore made

to the legislature for another act, more specific and comprehensive in its provisions, which was readily conceded; so that the attempt to narrow the religious liberty which the dissenters and Methodists enjoyed led to its greater extension; and the rights of conscience claimed by these people were more distinctly recognized by the legislature, and more effectually secured, than they had ever previously been. The excellent men who were concerned in drawing up the new toleration law contemplated its ultimate application to the various colonies of the empire; and the act of parliament by which colonial slavery is abolished extends the benefits of this law to all the colonies where persecuting enactments had previously existed, and leaves nothing more to be desired in regard to liberty of conscience. Few things would have afforded Mr. Watson a richer gratification than to see religious liberty, in connection with civil freedom, secured by law to the negroes in the West India islands; called as he often was to sympathize with that degraded people under their persecutions and wrongs. But he finished his course before this glorious consummation was achieved by British justice and mercy.

At the conference which was held in June, 1811, Mr. Watson was again appointed to the office of secretary, and was returned a second year to the Manchester circuit; but the annual address to the societies, as in former instances when he was secretary, was not written by him. This is easily ascertained by internal evidence. He had not spent many months in the second year of his appointment to Manchester before his health again failed him. The bleeding of his lungs returned; he was unable to discharge the full duties of his office; there was little probability that he would ever be able permanently to endure the labours of an itinerant ministry; and as he had long been dissatisfied with the discipline of the Methodist new connection, and therefore in some degree unhappy in his union with that body, he tendered his resignation to the authorities in the circuit, and removed to Liverpool; where, after the lapse of a few months, he offered himself as a private member of society in the Wesleyan connection. Being providentially laid aside from his public ministry, and scarcely able to preach at all, he engaged himself at an annual salary to his friend Mr. Kaye, as the editor of the Liverpool Courier, and for other literary services. In retiring from the new connection Mr. Watson acted in accordance with the advice of some of his most intelligent and confidential friends belonging to that body, who thought that, with his views, he was likely to be both more happy and useful among his old associates, from whom he had formerly departed under the pressure of unkind treatment and of strong temptation.

Mr. Watson's retirement from the Methodist new connection excited no surprise among those of his brethren who were intimate with him, and enjoyed his confidence; for they knew that it was the result of a serious and long-cherished conviction: and the manner in which he retired was every way worthy of his honourable mind. He had accepted an invitation to become a preacher in that connection when he was exceedingly anxious to enter again upon the regular duties of the Christian ministry, when every other door appeared to be closed against him, and when he had formed no settled opinions concerning Church government. The discipline of the new connection, when he was first

made acquainted with it, appears to have commanded his approbation; but when he saw the practical workings of the system, his views were changed, and it became in an increasing degree an object of his conscientious dislike. When he was unable to fulfil the duties of his ministry, he availed himself of the opportunity to retire from the body; but he made no attempt to disturb the tranquillity of the societies with which he was connected, or to influence any individual to follow his example. It was not with his brethren that he was dissatisfied, but with the system; and hence, after his secession, his affection for them suffered no abatement. This, indeed, might be expected from a man of his generous and upright character. They had received him into their body when he was in a great measure friendless and an outcast; they proposed to him on his admission no questions respecting his views of Church government,—a subject to which his attention had never been seriously directed; and through the entire period of his union with them they had treated him with unmixed kindness and respect. They had placed him in almost every office of trust and honour, except that of president of the conference; appointments had been selected for him adapted to his delicate health; and he had never been forced into the more extensive and laborious circuits in which many of his brethren toiled in the midst of great hardships and privations. It would be easy to enter into detail on the subject of Mr. Watson's dissatisfaction with the plan and order of the Methodist new connection; but this, it is conceived, is not necessary, and in this place would not be in good taste. After his return to the Wesleyan body he rarely adverted to this subject in his intercourse even with his most intimate friends; he never mentioned it in the spirit of angry vituperation; and the recital of his reasons might give pain to men whom he esteemed and loved as his brethren in Christ, and to whom he was under no common obligations.

When Mr. Watson left the new connection, so far was he from "seeking great things" of a worldly nature for "himself," that he was thrown entirely upon the care of Divine Providence; for he had made no arrangements whatever for admission into the Wesleyan itinerancy. Had his health been good, it was uncertain whether the Wesleyan conference would receive him; and there was little probability that a sickly man, with a wife and two children,—a man bearing marks of consumption and decay,—could be so admitted as to have for himself and his family a permanent claim upon the funds of the connection.—In taking this important step, therefore, secular motives were out of the question. He resigned a certain income for that which was contingent. His prospects in regard to temporal things were dark and unpromising; but a wise and merciful Providence was guiding him into paths of usefulness of which neither he nor his friends had any conception. He obeyed the dictates of his understanding and conscience, in the simplicity and integrity of his heart, trusting in God; and in the subsequent years of his life the immensely important services which he was called to render the cause of Christianity both at home and abroad, and the wonderful success with which it pleased the Head of the Church to crown his pious exertions, demonstrate that he followed the right course. In reference to his intended return to the Wesleyan body, he was often heard to say, "If I have once done

wrong, I ought fearlessly, as to the opinion of others, to do that which I now believe to be right." It has been stated that, before this time, he engaged in some commercial speculations in South America, by the failure of which he was involved in pecuniary difficulties; but there is no truth whatever in this report. Like his Lord, and many of his brethren, at this period of his life he had no property to lose; and his pure and inquiring mind was directed to higher objects than the accumulation of wealth.

The following letters which were addressed by Mr. Watson to one of his friends in Manchester, who still remained in the Methodist new connection, will show the kind and affectionate spirit which he continued to cherish toward individuals belonging to that body, and the Christian temper in which he had resigned his office in that community. The first is not dated; but both were written within a few months of his removal to Liverpool.

To Mr. Absalom Watkin, Manchester.

My Very Dear Brother,—A variety of causes, which it would be of no use to communicate, have prevented me from writing to you sooner. You have, however, heard of my improved state of health through our common friend, Mr. Makinson; as by his letter, and the visit of Mr. Shuttleworth, I have had some tidings of you. That you are seriously devoted to botany, appears from your having commenced a teacher of the science to some of your friends; and that chemistry has still its place, I may conclude from your quality of industry and application; though I know not that you studied it *con amore:* at least, I suspect that calixes, pistils, stamens, and blossoms, had a stronger hold upon your taste than earths, acids, alkalies, and salts; and that carbon organized in the forms of plants, was more *taking* than the carbon of the laboratory or the rudiments. I give you joy in the contemplation of *man* in the *discrete*, decomposed and separated into his osteological, sarcological, myological, splanchological, angeiological, neurological, and adenological parts; terms and things with which you are now acquainted. I wish I had been with you at the lectures; but as you have discovered the existence and use of the indicator digitalis, —I think they call it, but I am not sure,—in the human hand, I hope that it has a corresponding faculty in your and Mr. M.'s mind, to *point* out to my ignorance the leading features of the science when I see you at Whitsuntide.

A perishing body, however, does not, I am persuaded, interest you so much as the perishing souls of men; and I trust by this time you have got your spirits sufficiently roused to action, as to engage again in that good work for which I am persuaded God hath both designed you, and has been preparing you, though by a course of severe discipline. I have heard of your acting as precentor; and I hope to hear of your having assumed the teacher. May you be both happy in the work, and successful by it!

To be useful, we must be faithful. If we give, we must receive.—From an empty vessel none can drink; and a full one would soon become empty without supplies. "I will bless thee," said Jehovah to Abraham, "and thou shalt be a blessing." Let us then attend to personal piety, as the rock of our own souls, and active agents in pro-

moting the good of others; and let studies, friendships, books, and pleasures, be all regulated by this end. "Let us," says good Mr. Baxter, "esteem the creature only as it comes from God, or brings some report of his love."

I have been greatly pleased in reading Dr. Isaac Barrow's theological works. He writes philosophy like a divine; and divinity like a philosopher. He paints morality with as elegant a pencil as Blair, allowing for the style of the age; and he has yet the evangelical views of Baxter; but he is not so practical, nor so hortatory.

Looking forward to Whitsuntide with great pleasure, if it please God to spare me in good health, I am, with affectionate remembrance to Mr. Makinson, yours sincerely.

To the Same.

Liverpool, July 3d, 1812.

My Very Dear Friend,—Had you favoured me with a statement of the doubts of which you complain, I might have attempted to remove them; though the attempt would have had in it more of friendship than ability. As you have not, I can only glance at the subject generally. I will, however, notice first your query as to the writers mentioned by Paley. The paraphrase of Clarke has, doubtless, some of the peculiar excellencies of that great man; but to me a paraphrase is the most unsatisfactory mode of exposition. You have much sacrificed to the rhythm of the sentence; and words of no very definite meaning are often resorted to, to fill up the measure. A text has not unaptly been compared to milk; a paraphrase, to milk and water. Clarke, however, gives the narrative in neat language, has some happy expositions of passages; but loses, as I think, the true spirit of many more; and cannot be greatly desirable to a person who possesses Campbell and Macknight. With Collier I am unacquainted; but Taylor's "Key" opens the wrong door. You may conceive how an Arian, of a confirmed class, would explain the doctrine of justification by faith in a vicarious sacrifice, which is the subject of the Apostle Paul's discussion in the Epistle to the Romans. That there are many useful things in that work, cannot but be the case; for Taylor had both a vigorous and a cultivated mind; but he puzzles what is sufficiently difficult. I despair of meeting with a solution of every difficult passage in that epistle; but should I be so fortunate, it will not, I am persuaded, be from lights obtained from the author of the "Key to the Romans."

"He that never doubted never believed," says one; and if previous doubts give an energy to faith, you, I trust, will be a strong believer. Doubts on the doctrines of our religion are of two kinds: doubts which respect the doctrines themselves; and doubts which relate to their minuter details; or, as you study logic, doubts either as to the substance, or the mode; speaking in some sense figuratively. For instance: a person may admit the doctrine of atonement; and doubt as to the quality of the sacrifice, or the extent of its benefits, or the conditions of its application. With doubts of the first kind you have happily little to do; perhaps not much with those of the second; and your doubts may rather be an indistinctness of conception, than a refusal of assent. That it is infinitely desirable to possess a luminous conception of the dictates of eternal truth, is indisputable. "Grow in grace,

and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," is the injunction of an apostle. Two considerations ought, however, to prevent such an indistinctness of conception from distressing us, though none are to be assigned why it should not humble us. The first is, that clearness beyond the fact that such is the mind of the Holy Spirit, in many of his revealed doctrines, is not to be expected. We see them but as the sun through a mist. We doubt not the fact of his appearance, though we cannot define the object. It is radiance mixed and muddy; but it is still a glory above that of the moon and stars,—the lesser luminaries of human science. The fog is not around the luminary, except in our eye; he shines bright and unclouded in his native heaven. So it is not the doctrines of Christ which are dim, but the atmosphere of our understandings. That a human mind should labour when the "judgments," the thoughts of an infinite mind are revealed, is not surprising; they are subjects which "angels desire to look into," and which are to exercise the faculties of glorified humanity for ever. If that be to doubt, we doubt as angels do. But, to pursue my figure: what benighted traveller is there who would not rejoice in the return of day, though it should not bring "a morning without clouds?"

The second consideration is, that much of our present confusion of apprehension will give way before investigation, provided it be conducted in prayer, and with a disposition to do the will of God. "If any man will do his will," says our Lord, "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." How incomplete were your views, some time ago, of the economy of the human frame! But the lectures you have heard have taken you, step by step, into all the arcana of anatomy. Let us begin any science whatever, and insuperable difficulties seem to start up to forbid a future approach; but they are overcome by patient labour. Let not the undergraduate grieve that he has not the knowledge of the doctor; the doctor was once an undergraduate; and let him rather believe his improvement possible, and ply his task, than throw away his books in pettishness, dissatisfied that he knows not that by intuition which God hath made to depend upon comparison and induction.

Suffer me, however, a little farther. We venerate Bacon and Boyle, the fathers of the experimental philosophy; we are disciples of Newton and of Davy, because they are experimentalists; we give up the system builders, who form the foundation and the superstructure both out of the figments of their own fancy. Let us not be less philosophers in religion. Take the test of experiment here. What doctrines or interpretations bring us nearest to God, satisfy the cravings of sanctified desire most fully, ameliorate the heart, inspire devotion, and amend the life, in the highest degree? Here is the true rule of interpretation; and its application operates in two ways; and each in our favour. It is satisfactory, as the proof of all we know; for that only we know in religion which we prove in application: and it strengthens the intellectual powers, wings them for new flights, and directs the flight itself. In proportion as we are renewed in the image of God, we are "renewed in knowledge,"—one part of the image of "the only wise God."

Excuse inaccuracies: I have not time to revise what I have written.

Enclosed is a portion of the sand thrown out of the volcano at St. Vincent's; and which fell upon the decks of a vessel lying at Barbadoes,

now in Liverpool. It is my whole stock; and you may divide it with Mr. Makinson.

Mrs. Watson sends her best thanks for Baxter; I, mine for the "Arcadia."

While these letters display an affectionate interest in the mental and spiritual improvement of his correspondents, they demonstrate that Mr. Watson had not separated from his friends with any hostile feelings; and that they still regarded him with affection and confidence. We shall find the same kind and improving correspondence carried on after his appointment to a circuit as an itinerant Wesleyan minister.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Watson returns to the Wesleyan Itinerancy—Appointed to the Wakefield Circuit—Character of his Preaching—Assists at the re-opening of the Methodist Chapel at Halifax—Letter to his dying Father—Letter to Mr. Makinson—Preaches at the opening of a new Chapel at Armley—Letter to Mr. Makinson—Matthew Shackleton—Letters to Mr. Watkin—Outline of a Sermon on the Trial of Faith.

When Mr. Watson became a private member of the Wesleyan society in Liverpool, he attended the weekly meetings of his class with exemplary diligence, and was a pattern at once of piety and conformity to rule. On his admission into the society he remarked, with deep feeling, that for the first time during the last eleven years his mind was then fully at rest. He was soon accepted as a local preacher; and as his general health improved, and the bleeding of his lungs subsided, he occasionally occupied the Wesleyan pulpits, both in Liverpool and the surrounding country; and his preaching was universally admired. With the ministers then stationed in Liverpool, —the Rev. Messrs. Entwisle, West, Gaulter, and Buckley,—he had frequent intercourse; they heard him preach; and were compelled, in an equal degree, to admire the strength and elegance of his mind, his devotional spirit, and sound theological principles. He had little hope of ever being able again to resume his itinerant labours, when he settled in Liverpool; but those who knew him best were assured that if his health should in any competent degree be restored, he would again fully devote himself to the Christian ministry. This he felt to be his special calling; and no pleasure was equal to that which he experienced in preaching Christ and him crucified. Perceiving that he was eminently qualified for extensive usefulness, the ministers just mentioned united in requesting him to offer himself to the conference, and again to take his place in the Wesleyan itinerancy. Mr. Bunting, who had been previously acquainted with him, and well knew his worth, visited Liverpool at the time, and earnestly joined in the solicitation. Mr. Watson at length consented, and was recommended to the district meeting, and afterward to the conference, by whom he was very cordially received. The practical errors of his youth were buried in oblivion; the men who had formerly taken part against him, and had unhappily been a means of separating him from the connection, uttered not a word against his re-admission; for his character, both as a man of God, and a good minister of Jesus Christ, was established;

and without subjecting him to any farther probation, he was placed precisely in the circumstances in which he stood, when, eleven years before, he left his work in the Hinckley circuit. In surrendering himself to the disposal of the conference, Mr. Watson greatly disappointed the hopes of his friend Mr. Kaye, who calculated upon his valuable literary labours; and he was far from consulting his own secular advantage. Considering his extraordinary powers as a writer, he might, according to all human probability, have realized property to a considerable amount, had he devoted his exclusive attention to literature. Overtures of a very flattering nature were made to him at this crisis by persons in authority, if he would remove to London, and employ his pen in the public service; but his Lord called him to labour in the word and doctrine; and he had felt too severely the consequences of disobedience to that voice in his earlier years, to hesitate for one moment whether he should devote his life to the Christian ministry, or to any other pursuit, when his strength was adequate to the task. Never did the Wesleyan conference receive into its communion a minister of greater and more useful talents, or of more sound and enlightened piety; and never was a Methodist preacher more ardently attached to his brethren, and to the doctrines and order of the body, than Mr. Watson, from the time of his re-admission in the year 1812, to the end of his days.

The following notices concerning his reunion with the Wesleyan body are supplied by the Rev. Messrs. Entwisle and Buckley. The former of these esteemed ministers says, "Soon after his re-admission into our society, I prevailed on him to preach in my stead at Mount-Pleasant chapel, Liverpool. His text was, Psalm xii, 6: 'The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.' The depth and originality of thought displayed in this sermon, combined with an elevated style, Christian simplicity, and perspicuity, accompanied by his usual solemnity of manner and Divine unction, deeply impressed my mind; while I was favoured with such views of 'the words of the Lord' as I never had before. Perceiving that his health improved, and persuaded that his weight of talent and deep piety would render him an acquisition to our connection, and a blessing to the world, I proposed to him to allow me to recommend him to the ensuing conference, my worthy colleagues, Messrs. Gaulter, West, and Buckley, concurring with me in judgment. After due deliberation and prayer he consented to my proposal. I reflect on this event with pleasure; and thank God that I was in any degree instrumental in restoring to our body one who has been so eminently useful."

"Of the purity of his motives, and the integrity of his heart, in the arrangements connected with his return to our itinerancy," says Mr. Buckley, "perhaps no one could have a more perfect knowledge, or be a more impartial judge, than myself; the event passing under my immediate and minute observation, and being not unfrequently the subject of the most unreserved conversation."

When Mr. Watson was received by the conference, he was appointed to the Wakefield circuit, under the superintendency of his friend, the Rev. James Buckley, who had moved his acceptance in the conference. With as little delay as possible he repaired to his appointment, and entered upon his labours. The situation in which he was

now placed was in perfect accordance with his conscientious convictions, and his youthful habits The recollection of his early and joyous labours as an itinerant preacher occurred to his mind with a delightful freshness and power to which he had long been a stranger; and he discharged his official duties with superior fidelity and affection; while his intelligence and social temper endeared him to all who enjoyed his friendship. He was specially intimate with some families in Wakefield; and their admiration of his virtues and attachment to his person were unbounded, and continued without any abatement to the end of his life.

What he was as a colleague and a preacher at this period, the following statements by Mr. Buckley declare:—"We entered upon our work with much cordiality and affection; and met together every Saturday, to review the occurrences of the past week, and devise measures in relation to the future; uniting in prayer for Divine direction, and the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, that the word of the Lord might have free course and be glorified. These meetings were attended with many advantages; affording assistance in the choice of subjects, and in our preparations for the pulpit; in carrying plans of discipline into practical effect; and greatly tending to promote the unity of the Spirit. I had occasionally an opportunity of hearing my friend preach. His sermons were not always what are called great; greatness appeared to bend to the profit of a particular class of his hearers; yet that might be said of every one of his sermons which a Scottish professor once said of a discourse delivered by Mr. Wesley: 'If it was not a masterly sermon, none but a master could have preached it.' There appeared in him occasionally an energy which was capable of the most lofty flights. His style appeared to me to be correct, energetic, chaste, and harmonious; his manner was grave and solemn, such as becomes the pulpit; his subjects were well chosen, being generally the great doctrines of the Gospel, which he supported by cogent and irrefragable arguments, and adorned and illustrated by elegant and choice metaphors; the whole flowing from a heart sanctified by the grace and truth of God. His ministry, however, did not at first attract that attention in the Wakefield circuit which might have been expected, and which it so justly deserved, except among the more discerning and intelligent persons belonging to the several congregations."

It was in the autumn of the year 1812, and soon after Mr. Watson's arrival in the Wakefield circuit, that the writer of this narrative became acquainted with him. He came to Halifax, to preach at the re-opening of the Methodist chapel in that town, after it had undergone considerable enlargement, which had been rendered necessary principally in consequence of the very efficient ministry of Mr. Bunting then stationed there. The writer had often heard him mentioned, as a man of very extraordinary talents, but he had no adequate conception of the greatness of his powers as a Christian preacher. He went to hear him at Halifax on the Sunday evening; and the impression made upon his mind by that sermon will never be effaced. More than twenty years have elapsed since its delivery; but the recollection of it is as distinct and vivid as ever. It displayed such a grasp of thought, a force of reasoning, and splendour of illustration, and at the same time was so rich in Christian sentiment and pious feeling, as to produce an almost overwhelming sensation of wonder and delight. With the

truths which were then inculcated he had long been familiar; but they were placed by Mr. Watson in a light so new and striking, and enforced by an array of argument so powerful and convincing, and presented in a garb so beautiful and attractive, as to awaken a class of feelings of which the hearer seemed to have been previously unconscious. The sermon was the loftiest display of intellect and eloquence he had ever witnessed. The text was, "The children which thou shalt have —— shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell," Isa. xlix, 20; and the subject of the discourse was the enlargement of the Christian Church. After stating the nature of that enlargement, and showing that it consists in the accession to the body of believers of individuals converted from the error of their way, saved from sin by faith in Jesus Christ, and made spiritual worshippers of God, he proceeded to speak of the enlargement of the Church in three distinct views: as the fulfilment of prophecy,—a proof that there is a Divine agency at work in the earth,—and a source of joy to good men. On the subject of that Divine influence by which the Gospel is rendered the instrument of salvation, and men are made new creatures, his remarks were particularly valuable and striking. He combatted the reasonings of Gibbon, who attempted to account for the early propagation of Christianity, by merely second causes; and characterized that celebrated skeptic as "eloquent in error." In proving the reality of the influence in question, he argued from that uniformity by which all Christian conversions are distinguished. Under whatever circumstances men are converted to the religion of Christ, and in whatever part of the world, though their feelings may vary in intensity, those feelings are substantially the same. In all genuine converts there is the same hatred to sin, the same penitential sorrow, the same desire after pardon and purity, the same absolute reliance upon the sacrifice of Christ, the same love to God and man, the same delight in devotion, indifference to the world, careful avoidance of sin, and hope of a blessed immortality. The perfect sameness of the work, he contended, demonstrates the oneness of the agent by whom it is accomplished; and the holy and beneficial nature of the work proves that its author is Divine. He remarked, farther, that the enlargement of the Church always takes place in connection with the inculcation of a certain set of doctrines; such as the fall of man, the atonement of Christ, justification by faith, regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost, and the necessity of personal holiness. When these doctrines are faithfully and prayerfully enforced in the Christian pulpit, the Church is enlarged; when they are denied, or withheld from the people, by those who minister in holy things, the Church is either stationary, or declines both in spirituality and number. No open sinners, in cases of this nature, are brought to repentance; no broken heart is healed by the consolations of pardon; and no persons of profligate character are sanctified to God. The Holy Spirit sets his seal to "the truth as it is in Jesus," and makes it the effectual means of salvation; but he will not put the same honour upon the powerless reasonings of the mere apostles of moral virtue, with whatever elegance of diction they may be enforced. It is only the doctrine of "Christ crucified" that is "the wisdom of God, and the power of God." "Suppose a piece of very complex machinery sub-

mitted to your inspection," said Mr. Watson, "the nature and construction of which you are unable to comprehend. Should you see a certain pressure applied to a particular part, and then perceive that the whole was immediately put into beautiful and harmonious motion; when that pressure was withdrawn, were the motion instantly to cease, and were the same results invariably to take place whenever the experiments were repeated, you would, of course, infer that the motion depended upon that particular pressure." From this illustration he took occasion to show the established connection which subsists between a truly evangelical ministry, and those spiritual and moral results which it is the great end of Christianity to produce; a connection which is demonstrated by the entire history of the Christian Church, and especially by every revival of true religion. It was manifest that a man who could deliver such a sermon as this, was eminently qualified to instruct the world through the medium of the press; and in a conversation with him after the conclusion of the service, the writer inquired of him whether he had ever turned his attention to authorship; and Mr. Watson answered, "I have never published any thing of consequence, except a political pamphlet in reply to Mr. Roscoe, of Liverpool, nor have I the slightest wish to be distinguished as an author. That is a subject to which my thoughts have never been directed."

The conclusion of this year was to Mr. Watson a season of solemn interest. His father, who then resided at Nottingham, had arrived at the age of three-score years and ten, and was labouring under a dropsical complaint, the fatal termination of which was daily expected. Mr. Watson's own health was so extremely delicate, that he was unable to visit his dying parent; and indeed it appeared to be sometimes a matter of doubt whether the son would not first enter into the world of spirits. In this enfeebled and precarious state, suspended between life and death, and uncertain which scale would preponderate, he addressed the following letter to his afflicted father. It displays in a very striking light the strength of his filial affection, and his intense solicitude for the spiritual interests of one so nearly related to him.

Wakefield, Nov. 12th, 1812.

My Dearest Father,—After having had many anxious thoughts concerning you, I was just sitting down to write to you when I received my sister's letter. I notice in it your desire to see me; and be assured that I am anxious also to see you; and if I can do so, I will. Our confinement in the circuit is, however, great; and I am very unfit for a journey, owing to my remaining very poorly; being subject to sudden bilious attacks, so that sometimes I know not but I may even escape before you into the world of spirits.

For myself, afflictions have been good, very good for me; and I bless God for them. He corrects like a father; and severe diseases require severe remedies. Happy for us, if the Divine Physician does not administer in vain! I have not forgotten you at a throne of grace. Every time I bow my knees I entreat God to bestow his supporting, saving, and comforting grace upon my dear parent; and I trust that I have not joined my feeble prayers to yours in vain. Again, I would say, that God has a good purpose to accomplish in your affliction, and therefore entreat him to perform his work of salvation fully.

You are in the furnace; and it afflicts me to hear that the dispensation is so severe, and the fire so hot; yet, if the stubborn dross of our sins cannot be otherwise separated from our souls, all is mercy still. "I will sit as a refiner's fire," saith the Lord; and it is comfortable to reflect that he does sit by and watch the operation. Yet, with submission to his will, it cannot be wrong to pray that he would mitigate your sufferings, make for you a smoother road to the house appointed for all living, or so increase your inward strength and comforts, that the soul may become less sensible to the pains of the body, and that you, like dying martyrs, may shout and triumph in the flame itself.

I trust that you are satisfied as to your acceptance with God; nay, that you can rejoice in the full assurance of his love revealed to you by his Holy Spirit. Be determined to obtain this; for there is no other ground of safety and happiness than an application of the blood of atonement to our consciences, taking away the guilt of sin, and the condemning power of the law. It is to be received by an act of faith. Be persuaded that Christ is able to bless you with this full and glorious comfort *now*, and venture your whole upon him; wait every moment for the evidence that the work is done, till faith, and joy, and praise spring up in your heart. This would be necessary, were you in health; but now the time is short, and more than commonly uncertain. O wrestle like Jacob, till you obtain the blessing.

In like manner proceed to obtain the full sanctification of your nature. It is not death, but grace, that must destroy our sins, and make us meet for heaven. Have faith in the promise of the Father to send the Holy Spirit in all the power he exerted in the day of pentecost, to burn up the very root of corruption, and fill you in a moment with all the love and power of God, making you one with Christ, and an entirely new creature.

By the same acts of praying faith expect perfect patience, peace, and love to be wrought in your mind, that you may come up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and spring up a mature Christian, saying, "Not my will, but thine be done."

The language of Mr. Charles Wesley on his death bed may be suitable to your case:—

> "In age and feebleness extreme,
> Who shall a helpless worm redeem?
> Jesus, my all in all thou art,
> Strength of my failing flesh and heart;
> O might I catch a smile from thee,
> And drop into eternity!"

You are indeed in affliction, as a "leaf before the wind; but there is a merciful and compassionate High Priest, who knows how to succour you, being tempted and tried like unto you. O cast yourself at his feet. Tell him you have heard of his compassions, and wait to prove them. Tell him that you are nothing, can do nothing, and wait to prove him to be your all in all. Have large and high thoughts of the boundless mercy of God; for though we have sinned grievously, and awfully neglected his salvation, he is the Saviour still. He hateth putting away, and delighteth in mercy. He still spreads to receive us arms of mercy; and his voice is, "Come unto me; for I

came to seek and save that which was lost." O may you and I, and all of us,

"To his arms of mercy fly,
Find our lasting quiet there."

I sympathize with my mother. The Lord support and bless her with his favour and strength! I am your affectionate son,

R. WATSON.

The venerable sufferer, to whom this very pious letter was addressed, died on the 27th of November.

After Mr. Watson's appointment to the Wakefield circuit, he continued his affectionate and improving correspondence with two of his friends in Manchester, belonging to the Methodist new connection.—The following extracts from his letters are worth preserving, for the light which they cast upon his character and history, and the valuable sentiments which they contain. A considerable part of the first letter was written in Latin, and relates to certain peculiarities of expression in that language, in the study of which he was actively engaged.

To Mr. Makinson, of Manchester

Since virtue operates as a preservative of friendship, it is a rational act in each of us to promote our mutual piety: permit me therefore to commend to your serious attention something which I have lately found to be useful to myself. The Apostle Paul delineates the perfect image of a Christian in these words: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." I take this as my standard of examination every night; and try myself as to the fervour of my "love" to God and man; the "peace" and tranquillity of my passions; the spirituality of my "joys;" my "long suffering" and long forbearance with untoward persons, as God has long borne with me; my "gentleness," courtesy of spirit and behaviour;—for the Gospel does that as to the manners which all the maxims of Lord Chesterfield cannot effect; as the apostle in another place also says, "Be courteous," I find courtesy to be a part of the religion of Christ;—my "goodness," active benevolence, in what I have imitated the unwearied goodness of Him who is ever giving; recollecting, too, that we then become most like him when we impart much and want little;—"faith," fidelity, or trust; for this I take to be the meaning of the word here, though I would not confine it to this explication;—"meekness," freedom from unlawful anger;—"temperance," the government of the senses, and of the imagination.—In applying this standard, ah! how low have I sunk! and when brought to this touchstone, how base and alloyed the metal! Yet is it infinitely better to know our defects, though the discovery be painful, than to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. Let God be praised that, by his grace, we approach at all to this description; and may he who can fulfil in us all the good pleasure of his will answer our prayers to this effect, and answer them speedily!

I should have finished my letter in Latin, however bald, but that I had delayed so long, and was afraid you should have the shadow of a cause to charge me with neglect: but let your reply be all Roman.

I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you in a few weeks, but cannot fix the time; probably at Easter, as I shall, God willing, assist in opening a new chapel at Armley, near Leeds, on Easter Monday.—Present my best regards to Mr. Watkin, to whom I intend to write next. I have done very little in Hebrew, but have not wholly neglected it. I find, upon summoning up what I learned, that I can translate with tolerable facility by the help of the lexicon. Mrs. Watson joins in remembrances.

Some very heavy storms have made me think of Horace:—

Sæpius ventis agitatur ingen
Pinus; et celsæ graviore casu
Decidunt turres, feriuntque summos
*Fulmina montes.**

The opening of the new chapel at Armley, here anticipated by Mr. Watson, was a memorable occasion. The village was large and populous; the chapel was spacious; the Methodist society in the place was numerous and influential; and the religious services, which were well attended, were exceedingly interesting and impressive. Mr. Bunting preached in the afternoon, on the apostolical commission, Mark xvi, 15, 16; and Mr. Watson in the morning and evening. In the morning his text was, "Ye are come unto Mount Sion," Heb. xii, 22; from which he gave a most edifying and instructive description of the Christian dispensation, typified by the services of the Jewish sanctuary; and in the evening he preached on, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth," Psalm cx, 3. After a concise introduction, in which he showed that these words have no direct reference to the doctrine of irresistible grace, in support of which they have so often been quoted, he proceeded to speak of converts to the faith in Christ, whom he described as numerous as dew drops in the morning,—clad in the beautiful armour of holiness,—marshalled by the great Captain of their salvation,—and led forth by him to glorious war against the ignorance, superstition, and wickedness of the world.—That world he represented as "in the wicked one;" and gave a most appalling view of the influence and dominion of Satan over the unenlightened and unregenerate part of mankind. Among them education, commerce, legislation, literature, and even religion, are impregnated with evil. All this evil was to be counteracted and overthrown by the Christian Church, acting under the direction of the Lord, and in the power of his might. Upon the mind of every serious and attentive hearer, the entire discourse left a deep and permanent impression of the power of Satan, the wretched and perilous state of unholy men, and the obligations of Christians to use every exertion, both unitedly and in their individual capacity, to promote the interests of true religion. The sermon was calculated to excite the highest admiration of the preacher's abilities; but that feeling seemed to be lost in commiseration

* When high in air the pine ascends,
To every ruder blast it bends.
The palace falls with heavier weight,
When tumbling from its airy height;
And when from heaven the lightning flies,
It blasts the hills that proudest rise.
FRANCIS.

for mankind, the conviction of personal duty and responsibility, regrets for past neglect, and the desire to do something for the advancement of the Christian cause.

The following is an extract from a letter addressed to the same friend, and, like the former, written partly in Latin. It is highly characteristic of Mr. Watson's views of the comparative value of Christianity and philosophy:—

"My letter was interrupted by my being called to visit an old follower of Jesus Christ; but, being returned, I resume my pen. I have been much profited by the interview. I have been not to instruct, but to be instructed. For some years I have not seen the dying hours of even a good man so much honoured. One of his expressions was, 'Days, weeks, and months have rolled round during my affliction; and I have scarcely known the night from the day, nor the day from the night; so rapidly and joyfully have the hours escaped me. I have felt nothing but joy and love. Not for a moment have I been impatient, nor weary, nor wished it otherwise with me; so marvellously has God wrought in me. This is the hand of God. This never grew in nature's soil. Glory, glory be to God! Not unto me, but to his name be the glory.' On my saying that the reasons for his heavy afflictions being permitted would be fully explained hereafter, he said eagerly, 'God is explaining them to me now. I do not wait for light. All is clear.—Wondrously does he work in me every moment; and make every thought praise and prayer.' Now, what would an infidel say to this? Lord, give me this religion, and let the world have its philosophy."

The probability is, that the afflicted person here referred to was Matthew Shackleton, who is well known to have been a favourite character with Mr. Watson. This poor man, who was a local preacher, and lived in the neighbourhood of Wakefield, was a weaver, far advanced in life, and had been sickly from his boyhood. He was diminutive in size; his labour was often interrupted by illness; his earnings were therefore small and uncertain; and had it not been for the kindness of his friends, his privations and sufferings would have been severe. His spirit was naturally buoyant, his understanding vigorous and acute, and his piety was deep and cheerful. Mr. Watson delighted much in the society and conversation of this good man; and often remarked, that, had he been favoured with a regular education, and been placed in other circumstances, he would, in all probability, have been one of the first metaphysicians of the age. With him it was an admitted principle, which he frequently repeated, especially in reference to his own afflictions, that "God is doing the best he can for every body:" regarding, of course, the operations of omnipotent goodness and mercy as always under the restraint and direction of infinite purity, justice, and truth. Mr. Watson often ministered to the necessities of this intelligent and holy man, admiring in him the power and excellence of vital godliness. He died in the joyous faith and hope of the Gospel a few years after Mr. Watson had left the Wakefield circuit.

To Mr. Absalom Watkin, of Manchester.

My Very Dear Friend,—I thank you for your letter; and hope that, whatever delays may occur in my answers, they may be attributed

to any thing else but indifference to a friendship I shall ever value. I am happy to find that you feel an increasing pleasure and profit in the duties of the ministry. That employment gives an object to our studies, is a guard upon our conduct; and, by a law of grace, as necessary in its operation as any law of nature, increases grace and knowledge by communicating them, as long as it is performed in a right spirit. Go on, then, in this good work; and may God prosper you. You seem, however, to me, to be in a kind of bondage, from the views you have of the extensive knowledge requisite for a preacher. If you had said, "for a divine, or for a preacher to learned audiences," the observation would have been more just; but for a useful Methodist preacher extensive theological knowledge is not necessary. Good sense and piety are our grand requisites. The one to be applied to understand the fundamental doctrines of experimental godliness; and the other, to preach them with zeal, and the demonstration of the Spirit. With these qualifications you may boldly go forth; for with these only the most of us have gone forth, and have been successful. I do not make this remark with the intention of scouting the honourable ambition you feel to become a divine; but to endeavour to quicken your natural backwardness, and to induce you, by a friendly hint, to break through the temptation, that till you know more theology you are unfit to preach. It is true, if we intend publicly to enter into the difficulties of divinity, much learning will be requisite to conduct us honourably through our undertaking; but these are subjects rather fitted for the press than the pulpit, where the plainest truths, expressed in the plainest manner, will be found most useful. Let us, nevertheless, most deeply and extensively study the whole of revelation, but not in every particular with a view to the pulpit. We may be relatively ignorant, and yet neither unwise nor unprofitable preachers. This distinction has often relieved my mind, and it may yours; but I never considered it as an apology for sloth. As a proof of this, I am so convinced of my ignorance, that I have begun the study of divinity with new ardour; and, if that can be a motive, with conscious shame.

I wish you had given me your opinion on some subjects, rather than have asked mine; for I feel afraid of being *thought*, nay, of *being*, dictatorial. However, be assured that what I say is in deference to my friends. As to your stated difficulty, "on actions done before conversion," it seems partly to rise from the use of equivocal words. You instance a wicked man giving alms; and say, that cannot be a bad action: you think it has something good in it. Now, in the first place, the word "good" is equivocal. It may mean good beneficially, as to man; or good morally, as to God. In one of these senses almsgiving is a good action: who can doubt it? In the other it is not good, because it is not a work of the heart. Secondly, "bad" is an equivocal word, as you use it. It may mean not a good action, or positively a bad one; that is, a wicked action; for an action may not be good, and yet not bad. If the alms were given from ostentation, the action is morally bad, because it involves a corrupt principle: if they were given from a mere impulse of natural feeling, it is not a moral action at all, and therefore morally neither good nor bad; yet beneficially it is good as to the object, though indifferent or bad as to the agent. You continue: "If the man was not a necessary agent, but had the power to withstand

his feelings, he did well;" that is, religiously. This I dispute. We seem agreed that the action, in order to the determination of its moral character, must be an effect of our moral nature; that is, of our understanding and will; then the whole question lies here, "What determines the will to act?" If the feelings solely, almsgiving has no more morality in it than the actions of eating and drinking, to which we are determined by appetite. If the will is determined by a persuasion in the mind that it is for the benefit of society, that one man should relieve another; it is a moral action, not a religious one: the latter it becomes only when we do it, as we ought to do all things, for the glory of God. Therefore I conclude with the orthodox article, that works done without faith have in them the nature of sin, as to God. As you are studying logic, take a syllogism:—

Without faith it is impossible to please God;
But wicked men have not faith:
Ergo, Wicked men cannot please God.
The major, being an inspired proposition, cannot be doubted.
The minor is proved thus:—
He that believeth shall be saved;
But wicked men are not saved:
Ergo, Wicked men do not believe—have no faith.
Again:—
True charity is the fruit of faith;—faith worketh by love;—
But wicked men have not faith:
Ergo, Wicked men have not true charity.

I do not, however, see that the text you mention leads naturally to these distinctions, though on other subjects they are both important and necessary. The persons addressed are Christians; and are exhorted to do good, to the souls and bodies of men, from Christian motives: the example and command of Christ; the consideration of their duty as servants receiving talents, and having a charge to occupy till their Lord shall come; and in obedience to those soft and tender compassions which the love of God produces in the hearts of good men. The subject you have started is a very serious one; and on this particular we must be clear before we can properly preach the doctrine of justification by faith alone. All works done before justification are sinful either from their nature, or from defect; and consequently sin is imputed to us till the moment we believe; and then, and not till then, faith is imputed for righteousness, in the stead of righteousness. But you perhaps say, "As far as relates to our obedience to the perfect law, we have defects after justification, and therefore we sin." So we do; but with this glorious difference, that having a constant faith in the sacrifice of Christ, that faith is constantly imputed to us for righteousness, and no charge lies against God's elect; whereas, up to the moment of our justification, every sin and every defect is charged upon us, even the defects of the very fruit of our repentance.

Your observations upon cheerfulness and gloom demand consideration, and may form a profitable subject of conversation when we meet. At present, it strikes me as a good rule, to consider the effect of both upon our duties in the closet; and thus to judge whether in either we have gone to an extreme. To be cheerful without being light, grave and not sad, is an attainment of no ordinary value. Perhaps the best

way is to "be always employed, and never triflingly employed;" and, when we meet our friends, to cultivate a disposition to converse on many different subjects, but all useful ones.

It is just three months since I had the pleasure of your company. How fleet is time!

Truditur dies die,
*Novæque pergunt interire lunæ.**—HORACE.

Well, let them wax and wane. We haste into eternity, to immortal joys; a holy society; to a purified, exalted, and never-ending friendship.

Give my love to all friends.

To the Same.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Yours with the books came duly to hand. I will return the books which I have of yours as soon as an opportunity serves. Your view of the office of Christ, as administering the kingdoms of nature, providence, and grace, is, in my opinion, supported by the whole of Scripture; and though not, as you suspect, an original thought, is not much insisted upon by theologians. It has long been a favourite topic with me; and I have occasionally expressed it incidentally in preaching. To me the second person in the trinity appears to be the acting God of the Old Testament, ruling over Jews and Gentiles in virtue of his anticipated passion, of which this rule was the reward as to him, and an act of mercy as to the world. The following passages, among many others, support the doctrine:—"All things were created by him, and for him;" "all things are put under him;" "he is appointed heir of all things;" "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" "then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." And the sublime scenery of the Revelation represents "the Lamb" as destroying his enemies, and plaguing the nations, as well as supporting his Church. These great and consolatory truths result from the doctrine. The world is governed in united mercy and justice, being in the hands of a mediator; the revolutions of nations have a bearing upon the spread of Gospel truth; the dispensations of Providence, both as to nations and individuals, are subservient to, or move in conjunction with, purposes of grace. The field of reflection is very wide.

I have not a sermon on the resurrection which would afford you any pleasure in the perusal; but I copy a part of the outline of one I preached at the last district meeting; and if you can make any use of it, you are welcome.

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i, 7.

When Thomas was invited to put his fingers into the prints of the nails in his Saviour's hands and feet, and to thurst his hand into the

* Day presses on the heels of day,
And moons increase to their decay.—FRANCIS.

Lord's side, he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God;" and Jesus addressing him said, "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed."

The persons to whom this epistle was addressed had not seen Christ, verse 8; yet their faith is not represented as inferior. This proves that faith is not merely an intellectual principle, but a moral one also. If wholly intellectual, it is difficult to understand the words of Christ; and to prove that those who had a weaker evidence of the resurrection than Thomas were more blessed. The blessedness then would be in proportion to the quantity of evidence. But where no evidence is *sufficient*, the strength of faith does not depend upon any degree of evidence *more than that*, but upon the docility of our minds, and the desire to know and do the will of God. Hence the centurion's faith was greater than any that was found in Israel.

Faith, therefore, is a moral principle; a work of the heart, as well as of the head; and hence also it is associated with moral dispositions. We read of making shipwreck of faith and of a good *conscience*. For this reason faith has so much importance in the Christian scheme. Men are not damned or saved for an opinion, as some say: faith is the root of goodness; and a heart of unbelief is an evil heart, departing from the living God.

These observations may serve as a key to the text, which speaks of the trial of faith. If faith were a set of opinions only, it could not be tried: but a moral principle is the subject of trial; of being held fast or lost; of increase, diminution, destruction.

I. Explain the nature of Christian faith.

Faith is to be considered,

1. As standing opposed to reason. Not in the opposition of hostility, but of principle and operation. By reason we form opinions on such subjects only as are within the reach of human understanding. The limit of reason is human knowledge. Faith rises into a higher reason, and knows no limit but the infinite wisdom of God, and the revelations he may make.

From this it appears of how little service mere reason would be in religion; as we know so little (perhaps nothing) of God, our immortal nature, and the future existence. It is faith which enlarges the boundaries of our knowledge.

Yet to a certain degree there is an essential connection between faith and reason. The proper work of reason, prescribed by faith, is, first, to examine the evidences of a revelation; and, secondly, to search its meaning; not to judge its doctrines, but to understand them.

2. Faith is opposed to practical unbelief.

3. Faith has in it the nature of trust and recumbency. Credit and trust are distinct ideas.

4. Faith is to be considered as opposed to respect for the agency of second causes, where the promises of God are concerned. In relation to the birth of Isaac, Abraham looked not at second causes, but placed an absolute reliance upon the Divine veracity and power.

5. Faith is opposed to sense. We walk by faith and not by sight. It opens an invisible world, and makes the future present.

II. Its trial.

All graces are tried; but faith has its peculiar trials.

1. It is tried by the pride of human reason. Two classes of men are subject to this temptation; men of enlarged, and men of little minds. Vain man would be wise; he is fond of system; we are prone to bend the word of God to system, not our system to the word. If faith be conquered, the result will probably be skepticism; if it conquer, fixedness of opinion.

2. By temptations to sin. All temptations assail our faith first. So sin entered into the world by the suggestion of doubts respecting the Divine veracity.

3. Faith is tried by afflictions.

4. By the natural slothfulness of our spirits, and tendency to close our eyes upon spiritual and eternal things.

III. The honours which shall be put upon it at Christ's second coming.

1. Christ shall honour the faith of him who has believed mysteries upon his authority. The doctrine of the Godhead of Christ may be adduced as an instance. He "will show in his times who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."

2. He will honour the faith of him who has believed in afflictions, by explaining the mysteries of Providence. The confession will then be made, "He hath done all things well."

3. He will honour faith by displaying the moral effects it has in all ages produced.

4. By proving in the eternal redemption of his people that they have not believed cunningly devised fables.

These are only hints, but they will furnish subjects for a conversation between you and our common friend, Mr. Makinson; and if you will explain faith more clearly, and send me the result of your deliberations, I shall be very thankful.

Mr. Watson was not generally in the habit of dating his letters; and hence it is sometimes difficult to ascertain the precise periods at which they were written. The excellent sermon, of which he has here given an outline to his friends, is said to have been preached at the district meeting; and as the subject appears to have been fresh in his recollection, the probability is, that the letter was written in the spring of the year 1813, between the district meeting and the conference. The letter itself will serve to show the tone of thought which at this time pervaded his public ministrations, and the manner in which he arranged the topics of which his sermons consisted. At the same time it presents a striking display of that frankness and generosity which were among his most remarkable characteristics. He gave Mr. Nicholson the free use of his papers when they were stationed together in Liverpool; and he was equally ready to serve and oblige his other friends in the same manner, when they wished to be instructed by his intellectual labours.

CHAPTER VII.

Departure of Dr. Coke from England—Formation of a Methodist Missionary Society in Leeds—State of the Methodist Missions—Mr. Watson's Sermon on that Occasion—Writes an Address in behalf of the Methodist Missions—Speech at a Missionary Meeting at Halifax—Assists in forming a Missionary Society in Hull, and another at Sheffield—Speech on a similar Occasion in Wakefield—Letters to Messrs. Makinson and Watkin.

On completing his first year in the Wakefield circuit, Mr. Watson attended the conference in Liverpool, which was held in July and August, 1813. This was a memorable period in the history of Methodism; and the events connected with this annual assembling of the Wesleyan ministers exerted no common influence on his future character and labours. Up to that time the Methodist missions were mostly confined to the West Indies, and the British settlements in North America; and they were carried on under the general superintendence of the Rev. Dr. Coke, by whom the requisite pecuniary supplies for their support were principally raised. After crossing the Atlantic Ocean no less than eighteen times, for objects connected with religion, that most zealous and benevolent minister of Christ meditated a voyage to the east, intending to form missions in the island of Ceylon, and in Java. Considering his advanced age,—for he was then in his sixty-seventh year,—the want of funds, and the need of his services in the management of the missions already established, several of his brethren attempted to dissuade him from the arduous enterprise; but his heart was set upon the work, and their reasonings and entreaties were alike unavailing. Perceiving that his arguments failed to convince them, he burst into tears; and exclaimed, "If you will not let me go, it will break my heart!" When they saw that, so deep was his conviction of duty, he could not be induced to alter his design, they repeated the sentiment which had been long before uttered on a somewhat similar occasion, "The will of the Lord be done," Acts xxi, 14.

As soon as the conference was over, Dr. Coke began to make preparation for his voyage to India; and, having taken leave of his friends in England, he embarked in December, 1813, accompanied by the Rev. Messrs. Clough, Harvard, Ault, Erskine, Squance, Lynch, and M'Kenny. In the meanwhile the friends of the Wesleyan missions perceived that a responsibility devolved upon them which they had not previously felt; and that new and extraordinary exertions were necessary to meet this additional expense, as well as to support the missions which had long been in active and useful operation. The preachers had generally made an annual collection for missionary purposes in their several circuits; and Dr. Coke had long been accustomed to visit the principal societies in England and Ireland, pleading the cause, with an ardour peculiar to himself, both from the pulpit and from door to door. By these means a sum amounting to somewhat more than six thousand pounds was yearly placed at his disposal, to be applied chiefly in negro instruction; the spiritual necessities and temporal sufferings of the slaves in the West Indies exciting in those times a deep sympathy whenever they were pressed upon the public attention.

The moneys hitherto raised were scarcely sufficient to meet the expenditure; that expenditure was greatly increased by the mission to India; a debt of six thousand pounds, which had been for some time accumulating, had been only recently liquidated by a simultaneous and extraordinary effort; and the very efficient and successful exertions of Dr. Coke, in making collections and raising subscriptions, were at an end. In this new and unexpected emergency great anxiety was felt in various quarters, and several plans were proposed as likely to meet the exigency of the case. No men were more alive to the importance of the occasion than the Wesleyan ministers in the western part of Yorkshire; particularly the Rev. Messrs. Morley and Bunting, who were then stationed at Leeds. Mr. Morley recommended the formation of a society, which should employ collectors in raising weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual subscriptions in aid of the Methodist missions; and in order to the organization of such a society, the holding of a public meeting in that town. This plan had been successfully employed by some other denominations of Christians; and it was thought the more desirable in the present case, as it was known that several Methodist families in Leeds were in the habit of contributing small sums in this manner toward the support of missions belonging to another religious community, when they would more readily give the same amount in favour of their own missions, were the requisite facilities afforded. The project was mentioned to several ministers and friends in the Leeds, Wakefield, and Bramley circuits, and met with a general and hearty approval. It was finally agreed that a public meeting should be held at Leeds on the 6th of October; and Messrs. Buckley and Watson were requested to preach preparatory sermons. With this request Mr. Watson was very reluctant to comply. No man cherished a more intense interest in the cause than he; but the plan was new in Methodism; he had only been recently admitted into the connection; and he thought that perhaps some of the senior preachers, who were imperfectly acquainted with his principles and character, might accuse him of attempting to introduce injurious novelties into the body. He was willing to assist at the meeting; but he suggested that, considering the peculiarity of his case, he should take only a subordinate part in the measures which were then contemplated. This objection, however, was overruled; and he consented to take the proposed service. Mr. Buckley preached at Armley on the preceding evening; and Mr. Watson in the Albion-street chapel, Leeds, on the following morning. The public meeting was held in the afternoon; at which Thomas Thompson, Esq. M. P., presided. It was only intended in the first instance to form a society for the Leeds circuit; but at the earnest recommendation of Mr. Thompson, it was agreed to form a society for the district. All the services were numerously attended; and the interest created was deep and extensive. The speeches delivered at the meeting were published in a small pamphlet by Mr. James Nichols, then resident in Leeds; four large impressions of which were extensively distributed, and excited great attention.

The sermon delivered by Mr. Watson on the morning of this day was admirably adapted to give a tone of hallowed seriousness to the public meeting; and the crowded assembly cordially united in requesting its publication. To this distinction it was justly entitled. It was

delivered in a very impressive manner; and few things could be conceived better adapted to promote the cause of missions than its extended circulation. The text was, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live," Ezek. xxxvii, 9.—The sermon possesses great merit as a literary composition; but its chief value consists in the just and striking view which it gives of the state of the heathen, the power of the Gospel, and the obligation which rests upon the Church to make provision for its universal publication. On the first of these subjects Mr. Watson remarks, in a strain of eloquence almost peculiar to himself, "The heathen have turned 'the truth of God into a lie;' their religious opinions are absurd fables; and the principles of morality, being left without support, have been all borne down by the tide of sensual appetite and ungoverned passion. Ignorance the most profound, imaginations the most extravagant, and crimes the most daring, have ever characterized 'the world' which lies in the power of 'the wicked one.' But though all this be awfully true, it is not on these circumstances that we would principally fix your attention. There is another and more alarming truth to be told. The heathen world is judicially dead, under the wrath and curse of almighty God. The law which they have violated turns the edge of the sword of justice against them; the conscience which they have abused renders them miserable in their crimes; and as death expels their myriads from this state of being, they appear before the God of judgment, who hath said, 'The abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, shall have their part in the burning lake, which is the second death.'

"Were these solemn truths well fixed in our minds, they would stand in the place of a volume of argument to induce us to support missionary institutions. They would burst at once the bands of selfishness, and 'draw out our souls' to them who are perishing for lack of knowledge. The contemplation of the imminent danger of so great a portion of our fellow men would melt at once the frigidness of our natures, and cause our affections to flow forth in strong prayers, and still stronger exertions, in behalf of our brethren in distant lands, who have 'forgotten the God of their salvation, and have not been mindful of the rock of their strength.'

"To counteract these generous feelings, and to stop the stream of pity in its very fountain, we are aware that the doctrine of the safety of the heathen has been confidently affirmed; and perhaps we also have slumbered over our duty, lulled by the drone of that doting and toothless theology which treats sin with the cruel tenderness of an Eli to his sons, and employs itself rather in drawing extravagant pictures of the mercy of God, than in supporting the just rights of his government. Resting in plausible general principles, which are never pursued to their consequences, there are many who appear to consider the Divine Being under some obligation of justice to throw open the gates of salvation to the whole world of polluted heathen; thus making vice a kind of passport to heaven, and ignorance a better security for the eternal happiness of men than the full display of the glorious doctrines and the impressive motives of our religion. The true question is among all such persons often mistaken. It is not, whether it is possible for heathens to be saved,—that we grant: but that circum-

stance proves the actual state of the heathen world to be more dangerous than if no such possibility could be proved; for the possibility of their salvation indisputably shows them to be the subjects of moral government, and therefore liable to an aggravated punishment in case of disobedience. The true question is, Are the heathens, immoral and idolatrous as they are, actually safe? On this solemn subject we are not left to the decisions of human authority. Inspiration itself has decided it; and when human opinions and Divine revelation come into opposition, you will not hesitate to say, 'Let God be true, and every man a liar.' The reasoning of St. Paul, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, is of universal application; it bears no marks of particularity; and there is nothing in the state of the heathen of our day to render it less applicable to them than to the heathen of his own. His conclusion is, that for all their crimes and idolatries, 'they are without excuse.' They are ignorant; but it is because they 'do not like to retain God in their knowledge.' They have 'a law written on their hearts;' but they violate it. They have a conscience which 'accuses or excuses them;' but they disregard it; and 'therefore they are without excuse.' This is the conclusion of an infallible teacher, against which it is vain to reason; and from this it follows, that, if the fact of general and perhaps universal depravity of principle and action among the heathens be proved, then another conclusion of the apostle must follow of course, that 'the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against them;' that the valley is full of souls, dead to God, and under the sentence of an everlasting condemnation."

On the number of the heathen who are in this perilous condition, we have the following remarks, which produced a powerful effect upon the congregation at the time of their delivery:—"The slain of sin are innumerable. The valley, as we trace it, seems to sweep to an unlimited extent; and yet every where it is full! The whole earth is that valley. Where is the country where transgression stalks not with daring and destructive activity? where it has not covered and polluted the soil with its victims? In some places, it is true, we behold the 'few who are saved;' but in many large and crowded nations we should look even for that few in vain; and the words of the psalmist might, after the most charitable investigation, prove even literally applicable: 'They are all gone out of the way; there is none that doeth good, no not one.' Let us pass over Europe, whose population bears but a small proportion to that of the globe, though there chiefly the Christian name is known. Let us not even stop to inquire how many bones lie unburied and dry in that valley; or, if in many instances bone has been united to bone, in the profession of true religion, of how many the prophet would still say, 'There is no breath,' of vital religion 'in them!' Let us take our post of observation elsewhere. If we turn to the east, there the peopled valleys of Asia stretch before us; but peopled with whom? With the dead!—That quarter of the earth alone presents five hundred millions of souls, with but few exceptions, without a God, save gods that sanction vice; without a sacrifice, save sacrifices of folly and blood; without a priest, except a race of jugglers, impostors, and murderers; without holy days, except such as debase by their levity, corrupt by their sensuality, or harden by their cruelty. With a little difference as to

religious rites, the same description is applicable to the thirty millions of the race of Ham, and to the aborigines of the new world. This view, it is true, is somewhat relieved by a few rays of light shining here and there amid the gloom; by the cheering sight of a few prophets of the Lord sent forth by the piety of Christians, prophesying to the dry bones, and surrounded by a few living men, the fruit of their mission. But, however hopeful the gleam of success is, the affecting fact is, the valley is still full of dead. It is only in a few places on its verge that the prophets of the Lord are seen; only within a small compass that their voice is heard. On the rest of the valley the gloom of despair settles, and sin and death hold undisturbed dominion. No sound of salvation breaks the horrid silence, and no 'shaking is heard among the bones.'"

These sentiments, expressed with such eloquence and pathos, Mr. Watson never had occasion either to modify or retract. For nearly twenty years of his subsequent life he was in almost constant correspondence with missionaries in all quarters of the globe; and all his inquiries and accumulated knowledge served only to confirm the view which he has here so forcibly given. He has been often heard to say, that it was under a sermon preached many years before this period, by the venerable Andrew Fuller, of Kettering, that he received his first impressions of the wickedness of idolatry, and of the consequent danger and wretchedness of the heathen. The Methodist new connection has no foreign missions; and hence, during his union with that body, he had no opportunity of affording direct assistance in promoting the cause of Christ in pagan lands. But even then, it will be perceived, his attention was directed to the subject with feelings of no ordinary interest. His pastoral addresses to the societies of the new connection, and the sermons which he preached when stationed in Manchester, show that he was no indifferent spectator of the missionary operations carried on by different sections of the Church; and that he anticipated the most glorious results from these pious and benevolent agencies. The workings of his mind in those times distinctly exhibit the elements of that missionary zeal and enterprise which distinguished him in the latter years of his life.

The publication of this powerful sermon was not the only service which Mr. Watson rendered to the good cause. He was made one of the secretaries of the society then formed; and at the request of the public meeting he wrote an Address to professing Christians, stating the extent and objects of the Methodist missions, and their claims upon the countenance and support of the friends of humanity and religion, and especially upon the Methodist societies and congregations. This important document contains a just tribute to the zeal and piety of Dr. Coke, then on the point of leaving his native country for ever. The fact is, Mr. Watson greatly admired the doctor's character. That very excellent man had visited Wakefield in the course of the preceding year, and had preached and solicited subscriptions in behalf of his favourite mission to the slaves in the West Indies; and Mr. Watson had accompanied him to many families and individuals in that town, for the purpose of obtaining contributions, and was highly delighted with the urbanity, the Christian politeness, and the quenchless ardour of that friend of God and man.

After stating the necessity of a permanent increase in the funds of the Methodist missions, Mr. Watson says in this address, "It was with this view that a Methodist missionary society was lately established at Leeds; a measure which appeared to be equally called for by increasing opportunities for evangelizing heathen nations; by the excellent example of other Christian societies; and by the loss of the personal exertions of Dr. Coke, who for years has stooped to the very drudgery of charity, and gratuitously pleaded the cause of a perishing world from door to door. While he leads our little band of missionaries against the idolatry of the east, and while more than one hundred other Methodist missionaries,* in different parts of the world are immediately engaged in the same contest with the powers of darkness, it devolves upon us who remain at home to give effect to the necessary financial arrangements, and to furnish the sinews of this holy war."

It is impossible to estimate the effect produced by this appeal. Several societies of a kind similar to that which was formed in the Leeds district were instituted in different parts of the kingdom; and by most of them the address was adopted with slight modifications.—In the report which was read at the first anniversary of the society for the Leeds district, it was stated that the income of the institution during a period of somewhat less than twelve months was such, that, after meeting all the incidental expenses, the sum of £1000 had been transmitted to the treasurer in London; and it was added, "For the very liberal contributions thus enumerated, the committee consider the society to be deeply indebted, under the Divine blessing, to the free circulation of an 'Address to the Public,' drawn up at the request of the general meeting, by the Rev. Richard Watson, in which the extent and importance of the Methodist missions were briefly stated, and their claims on the support of the friends of religion were ably and energetically enforced. Of this address many thousands have been distributed, under the direction of the local committees."

It was not to be expected that the noble example of missionary zeal and liberality, set by the preachers and friends of Leeds and its vicinity, should be either unobserved or uninfluential. A public meeting was held at Halifax on the 10th of November following, for the purpose of forming a Methodist missionary society for that district, which was also numerously attended, and was followed by results similar to those which had characterized the proceedings at Leeds. Sermons were preached by the Rev. Messrs. Reece and Bunting; and Mr. Watson attended the meeting, where he delivered the following speech with powerful effect. He wrote it subsequently to the meeting, and gave it to Mr. Nichols, that he might append it to a fourth edition of the speeches delivered at Leeds. It was the first speech in behalf of Christian missions ever uttered by him at a public meeting, and is given entire. It forms an admirable commencement of that effective advocacy of the cause by which he was distinguished through a series of years.

* This number includes about forty men who were employed in the home missions of Wales and the more neglected parts of England. About sixty missionaries were then employed in the foreign work, and among the Roman Catholics of Ireland.

Mr. Chairman,—The subject which so evidently engages the feelings of this numerous assembly has been already placed in a variety of views by the speakers who have preceded me; and in all it has deeply interested our hearts. But, sir, it is wide as the mercy of God, and the wants of man; and though I cannot hope to add much to what has been so well and wisely said, there is a pleasure, in such a cause, to contribute even a mite.

Of the general principle of attempting to evangelize the world, little need now be said. This meeting, by unanimously passing the first resolution, has recorded an opinion in favour of missionary efforts, and pledged itself, in the true spirit of Christianity, to promote them. As the principle has been recognized, nothing now remains but to bring it into action; to mature our plans, and to fix our attention upon those motives which may encourage us to proceed to their execution, without variableness or shadow of turning.

Among many motives of high and commanding efficacy, this, sir, I think, is not one of the least important, that we act under the immediate influence of God himself. The position is, I think, unquestionable. In a meeting of this kind, it is a very natural question to ask, What is it that interests us in the welfare of heathen nations? We never saw them, and perhaps never shall see them. There is no natural, and in most cases, no civil connection between us. We are separated from them by oceans and continents. Man, too, is naturally a selfish being. Destitute of religion, his affections do not expand, but contract; and perhaps, beyond his instincts he has no affections.—What is it, then, which links us with the miseries of heathens, and excites the pity, and stretches out the hands of Christians, to their relief? It is the spirit of our religion; the influence of the God of love, the Father of the human family. It is that which tunes the chords of human feeling, and makes them vibrate in sympathy with the sounds of human misery in every part of the earth. If, then, sir, we act under his influence and approbation, we need not a stronger motive. We are the agents of his plans, and the almoners of his bounty.

There is something, sir, in the present circumstances of our religion which has a powerful bearing upon the support of missions. For many ages Christianity acted chiefly upon the defensive against her enemies, and employed herself in turning their weapons, and in defending her acquisitions, rather than in enlarging them. Yet these defensive conflicts have been often severe, and every age has witnessed them. Many of us are but young; yet we are old enough to remember one of the most formidable of these struggles, the organization of a grand conspiracy of infidels, in almost every part of Europe, against our religion. The great object was, to bring the Bible into contempt; to loosen the hold which Christianity had upon the hopes and fears of man; and all that learning, wit, sophistry, and zeal could do, was done to effect it. But, sir, as we are old enough to remember the commencement of the struggle, we have lived long enough to witness the victory. Did the attempt succeed? Let Bible societies witness. Has Christianity lost its hold upon the public mind? Let missionary societies witness. Never, sir, did our religion receive such honours as at the present moment. Kings do homage to her, and nobles call her bless-

ed. The poor man casts his mite, and the rich his gold, into the exchequer of heaven; and all ranks, to the confusion of infidels, proclaim a strengthened belief in the divinity and efficacy of our Gospel. This, sir, is a triumph, a glorious triumph; but I mention it principally because of a particular result. Christianity has now assumed an offensive attitude. She no longer waits the attack; but carries the war into the camp of the enemy. She calls every Christian into the field, in preparation for her grand assault upon the heathen world. And, sir, if we did not desert her standards, when her enemies were shouting an anticipated triumph, and when, to some persons, the contest appeared doubtful, we shall not desert them now, when the battle is turned to the gate. When victory crowns our banners, even cowards would be brave.

I beg leave, sir, to advert to a circumstance which is of considerable importance, as it relates to what appears, at least to my mind, an evident indication of Providence in favour of missions. Had the missionary spirit, which now pervades these islands, been excited in a country embosomed in the midst of the European continent, without a navy or maritime connections, it is difficult to conceive how any efficient plans for the instruction of the heathen could have been devised; however great the zeal of the inhabitants, the heathen could have received little from them beside their good wishes. But this spirit has been excited in Great Britain, the country to whom God has given the ocean; whose colonies extend to every quarter of the globe; whose vessels crowd every port of every shore; and whose sons speak almost all the languages of the babbling earth. Such a coincidence between our duties and our opportunities, our wishes and our means, cannot be overlooked. It is more than accidental. It is the finger of God pointing out our way. Our vessels are wafted by his winds to every clime, that they may carry not only our merchandise, but our missionaries; not only our bales, but our blessings; that

> "Where Britain's power is seen,
> Mankind may feel her mercy too."

Such an application of our maritime means will consecrate our commerce, perhaps fix it. You, sir, a commercial man, need not be told that commerce is volatile and inconstant; that she has often removed her emporiums; and that, in many places, the once crowded port is resigned to the net of the fisherman. But in those places commerce was never seen in connection with religion. She was made the handmaid of wealth, but not of charity. Let us, sir, make her the instrument of both; and, as the ancients with their gods in time of danger, we shall throw chains about her, and fix the fugitive to our shores for ever.

In opposition to such efforts as have been this day recommended, I can anticipate but one objection from any person bearing the name of a Christian. It is, that charity begins at home. I will not dispute the sentiment: it is entitled to some respect. It has passed into a proverb; and bears the aspect of hoary venerableness. It is a neat pocket edition of selfishness, and very convenient to the wearer. I should be very sorry to deprive him of it; and shall therefore only observe, that our purposes and plans are not inconsistent with this principle;

and that, in a word, charity to the heathen is charity begun at home.

This is not difficult to prove. We cannot take a step toward evangelizing the heathen without entering into many inquiries as to the extent of their moral wretchedness; and such inquiries are eminently useful to ourselves. In our present state we are seldom brought to value our own blessings, but by their loss, or by comparing our condition with that of others. By the loss of our religious privileges, I hope we shall never learn their value. But if, by comparing our light with the darkness of the heathen, our riches with their poverty, we learn to prize these blessings more, and to use them better; then, sir, missionary efforts will prove a blessing to us, to our societies, to our country; and charity to the heathen will be charity begun at home.

Much more might be urged in proof of the important moral effects produced at home, by sending the Gospel abroad, which I forbear: but I cannot omit to remark, that our feelings have a value; and I doubt not but every person in this assembly, who consults his feelings this day, is ready to acknowledge that charity is already begun at home, even in his own bosom. The pleasure we have in attempting to do good, the joy we feel in anticipating success, the good effects produced upon our minds by the prayers which we are excited, by meetings like this, to offer for others, are all *home blessings*. And if charity at home stands in so intimate a connection with charity abroad, let it then flow forth from ourselves to others, unchecked either by sordid maxims, or by sordid feelings.

I shall conclude, sir, with observing, that as we expect, on the best grounds, that God will go with us to this our great work, so we have the same reason to believe that he has gone before us, to prepare our way. This expectation is not an imaginary one. Heaven never gives an important blessing, without first preparing the receiver for it. Thus, when he first gave his incarnate Son to the world, a secret influence upon the nations raised an expectation of the great Deliverer. If, therefore, God is about to give his Son again to the heathen world, in his glorious Gospel, we cannot doubt that he is preparing it for the gift. He moves upon the Christian world to give, and upon the pagan world to receive. As in a long drought, before the rain is sent from heaven, the earth breaks into wide clefts, to catch the falling streams; so a sinful world is prepared, by its very wants, for the blessings of our religion. Formerly the attention of the world was directed to the rising light of the east; but the lamp of day has long left that quarter of the globe, and the expecting nations now turn to the west for the rising of the moral sun. They turn to us for light; and we will not refuse them. To many of them we are bound by gratitude. We received our light from them; and it remains with us, while they sit in darkness. But, sir, they begin to feel their wants. They say, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out:" and, thank God, there is enough for us and them. We have stepped into their privileges; we partake of the root and fatness of the olive, from which they have been broken; and while the olive is planted in the midst of us, we cannot lack the oil. Let it then be poured from vessel to vessel, till every extinguished lamp flames afresh, and the temple of the whole universe is filled with the brightness of the knowledge of the glory of God.

The example of the Methodists at Leeds and Halifax was quickly followed by their brethren at Hull, Sheffield, and Wakefield, where missionary meetings were held, and societies regularly organized, for the purpose of raising pecuniary supplies to send the Gospel of God to heathen nations. Mr. Watson lent his assistance at each of these places; and his sermons and speeches produced an indelible impression. The following notices concerning his sermon and the meeting at Hull have been kindly supplied by the Rev. John Beecham:—

"I heard Mr. Watson on that occasion for the first time. He preached on the forenoon of the day of the meeting, in George-yard chapel, from, 'And I saw another angel fly in the midst of the heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,' Rev. xiv, 6. This subject afforded full scope for his powers. The dignity of his person and manner bespoke attention; and he unfolded the design of prophecy, established the necessity of a human ministry of the Gospel, of which he regarded the flying angel as an emblem, and enlarged on the universality of the Gospel scheme, in a strain of sublime eloquence, which produced in me such feelings of awe and hallowed delight, as I can never forget. And the effect of his discourse, it was manifest, was general. On glancing at the congregation, all appeared to sit with their eyes rivetted on the speaker, and listening with almost breathless attention. It was in that sermon Mr. Watson delivered the fine passage which was so frequently quoted afterward on similar occasions: 'The Bible society has rolled a noble stream of truth through the earth; but that is not enough: we must send missionaries to stand upon its banks, and cry, Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!' Many were present at that time who, like myself, had gone from a considerable distance for the purpose of attending the meeting. These, on their return, spread abroad the fame of the preacher's greatness; and when Mr. Watson was stationed in Hull the following year, it was no uncommon thing for persons to visit Hull from distant places in Lincolnshire, in order to have the gratification of hearing him preach."

On the 26th of November, this year, a missionary meeting was held in Sheffield, and a society organized. Mr. Watson was present, and related an anecdote of a poor woman who had distinguished herself by her pious zeal in the good work. "A woman at Wakefield," said he, "well known to be in rather needy circumstances, came to a lady, one of the collectors, and offered to subscribe a penny per week in aid of the Methodist missionary society. It was immediately said to her, 'Surely *you* are too poor to afford it.' She replied, 'I spin so many hanks of yarn every week for a maintenance. I will spin *one more*; and that will be a penny for the society.' I would rather see that hank suspended in the poor woman's cottage, a token of her zeal for the Gospel, than military trophies in the halls of heroes. In them I should only see the proud memorials of victories obtained over the physical strength of man; but in the other I behold the triumph of a generous religion over the natural selfishness of a human heart."

In the year 1833, at the anniversary of the Missionary society for the Sheffield district, Mr. Montgomery gave the following account of this occasion, and of the impression made upon his mind by Mr. Wat-

son's eloquence:—"I am reminded by the presence of an honoured minister and friend, the Rev. Jabez Bunting, that it is nearly twenty years since, on a dreary, chill November day, in an assembly far thinner than the present, and less animated, the missionary society for this district was established. I had the privilege to take a share in the proceedings, and to assist with my feebleness in laying the foundation of this evangelical institution. On that occasion Mr. Bunting and Mr. Watson were deputed from the zealous band of innovators, who had ventured, in the provinces, to project, and to advocate from town to town, before it had obtained metropolitan sanction, the comprehensive plan of supplying funds for the support and extension of Wesleyan missionary labours, upon a scale far more magnificent than it had been possible to conduct them while their maintenance depended principally upon the personal exertions of Dr. Coke. I then first saw and heard Mr. Watson. But while my expectations, from reported speeches in the newspapers, had been highly raised, they were not entirely met; there was so much temperance in the tone, and so little ardour in the delivery of his sentiments; yet even then they made a deeper impression than I was aware of at the time. They recurred to me again and again in solitude. Mr. Watson, in fact, wore so well on acquaintance, that neither a first nor a second sight or hearing of him gave half the idea of his peculiar powers; which seemed to enlarge and improve with every fresh trial of their influence upon our understanding and affections. However, the occasion alluded to left an indelible memorial of his person, his manner, and the fact which he described. He mentioned, that an aged matron, having heard of the new thing in Methodism which was then so much talked of in the west riding of Yorkshire, grew anxious to have a hand in it herself, and to contribute out of her deep poverty something toward sending the religion of Jesus Christ to the heathen. Through hard and slow labour, indifferently paid, she earned a scanty subsistence by worsted spinning. She resolved to spin an extra hank a week, and throw the two mites which she should receive for it into the missionary funds. What she so generously resolved, she painfully accomplished, by sacrificing no inconsiderable portion of her brief leisure and her spare strength in this work of faith and labour of love. I have Mr. Watson in my eye at this moment. The picture is perfect in my remembrance, as he stood on the bench before me: while realizing the scene, as though we had all been with him in the widow's cottage, he pointed to the single hank, suspended from a rafter of the ceiling. I can never forget his attitude nor his look. 'She hath done what she could,' was the feeling of every one of his audience; and while the eloquent advocate expatiated on the value of such an offering, made in singleness of heart to the Lord, neither he nor his hearers, nor the humble contributor herself, were at that time aware of its value in influence as an example of what others in imitation would be stirred up to do in the same way; for I believe this was the first precedent of innumerable instances in which the poorest, the weakest, and the meanest in outward respects, have taxed their ingenuity as well as their industry to find out means whereby they could aid the same blessed cause. Indeed, these devices have been so frequently and so successfully practised,—each in turn operating as an incentive and an encouragement to others,—that, even in a

pecuniary sense, the poor widow's two mites may have produced a talent of gold to the missionary funds."

At the meeting which was held in Wakefield in the course of the following winter, thanks were voted to Mr. Watson for the address to the public which he had drawn up, on the subject of the Wesleyan missions, and which was then in extensive and beneficial circulation. In acknowledging this vote he spoke to the following effect:—

I wish, sir, that I had better deserved the thanks of this respectable meeting; and that the address had been penned by hands more able to do justice to the great cause it was designed to promote. The motion which has just passed has, however, given me great pleasure; not because a very humble attempt of mine was the subject of it; but because the favourable manner in which that attempt has been received proves that a very lively interest must have been excited in favour of our missions. It convinces me, sir, of the warm regard which the society has for the great end of its institution, when means so insignificant are honoured with its approbation.

From a subject which concerns myself I gladly hasten to one which concerns us all;—the institution we are assembled to support. It has already existed long enough to convince us of its beneficial character, and probable important results. Independent of the aid which the missionary cause will derive from it, there is sufficient reason to induce us to support it from the moral good it has produced among ourselves. The discussions and inquiries to which it has given rise have taught us to think more closely on the state of the heathen, the nature and efficacy of the Gospel system, and the obligations of Christians to diffuse their Divine religion. Our sympathies have been excited, our prayers have acquired greater fervour, and a new path of honourable duty has been set before us. In addition to this the establishment of our society has called into an active co-operation with Jesus Christ, and with his servants abroad, a great number of persons at home, who, but for the arrangements of the institution, would have been deprived of the opportunity they have so promptly embraced to show their love to his Gospel. In this band our cause has received a seasonable and valuable reinforcement. This district alone has added a regiment to the service; and when, as we hope, similar institutions are adopted by the connection at large, a whole division will be added to the armies of Christ. They themselves derive much good from these labours of love; but we as affording the most essential service to the common cause. They are our light troops who spread themselves over the country, and establish the magazines, and provide the sustenance required by those who are in immediate hostile contact with the enemies of God, and who are boldly displaying the red-cross banner of our religion in the sight of the heathen. I am sure that under a sense of their important services we shall all pray that their number may be increased, and that they may labour and faint not.

If I may be permitted to trespass upon your time a little longer, in expatiating upon the excellent effects resulting from this institution, I may add, that it is not among the smallest of its consequences, that our efforts and objects have excited discussion among those who are little favourable to religion. It is true, sir, they have assailed us with

all the little wit they have; and indignant vituperation, or fleering contempt, has not been spared. But, sir, they have talked about the Gospel, and missionary plans, and Christianity, and paganism; and in this fact we rejoice. Christianity (and the cause of missions is the cause of Christianity) is never so inefficient as when it is neglected; and we had rather, on this account, see it assailed with enmity than overlooked. No conviction can be wrought in those who are indifferent. Viewed by a careless eye, our religion may be concluded to be a cloud, a vapour; but let it be attacked, and it will be found a rock; and the force which resists, and turns the weapon, does often secretly convince the assailant, though he be too proud at once to confess it, that he is opposing an awful and sublime reality. It is of importance, therefore, that the zealous efforts of Christians in our day to spread the Gospel has turned the thoughts of men without religion to some of its most interesting truths. They may have treated these truths in a manner rude and ungracious; but still we have gained a point. They have thought about them; and the possibility is, that when the thoughts are once turned into this channel, they may be carried farther than was intended. Opponents of truth will always meet its defenders; and it seems the peculiar genius of Christianity, that it can never be brought near a human mind without exerting some influence upon it. It never fails to awaken principles in the soul, which will render to it secret homage.

By some persons, and those professing respect to our common religion, it has been said that we are carried away by a missionary mania; in other words, that we are mad. We need be at no loss, sir, whether to consider this charge as a censure or a compliment. I consider it a compliment of the best kind. It is true, we are all anxious to preserve the honours of our rationality; and there is nothing we usually feel more sensibly than attacks upon our intellects. It will, however, give little pain to those who enter with ardour into the missionary cause to be thought mad by such as make the purposes of the Gospel, and the plans of Heaven, a very small part of their study. We cannot wonder that, to those sober-minded Christians who scarcely are disturbed whether truth or error go foremost in the world, the feelings and actions of those who zealously support missions to the heathen should appear indications of a species of wild though amiable insanity. All subjects connected with missions tend to familiarize us so much with the vast designs of Deity himself, and the ample plans of his providence, they raise the soul to so lofty a mount of contemplation, spread before us so wide a prospect, and kindle so vigorous and daring a zeal, that our purposes seem to catch something of infinity, and to be greatly out of proportion to our means and strength. For, what are the purposes we form, what the ends we are aiming at, in our exertions? To shut those idol temples; to rear up those abject worshippers; to chase the forms of error from their minds, and the fiends of passion from their hearts; to reclaim the savage from his woods; to lay the foundations of civil society in morals; to break the fetters from the slave; to bind in amity the different orders of society; to banish wars from the earth; and to restore the human family to peace, and to God. These are our familiar conceptions; and they may have, perhaps they must have, to some minds

the air of madness. We do not, however, forget, sir, that St. Paul appeared to be beside himself to Festus; and yet the madness of St. Paul gave the death blow to Roman idolatry. A few disciples in an obscure room at Jerusalem waited for a commission to evangelize all nations. The magnitude of their conceptions, like ours, ill accorded with appearances; yet the plan was realized. It may be said, they were apostles and evangelists; and so are our missionaries. For, what is an apostle but a messenger; and what is an evangelist but a preacher of the Gospel? But it may be replied, "The Lord was with them;" and, sir, he is with us. The promise which then dropped from his lips now shines in the holy page; and Providence has handed it down to us, to assure us that it is a promise to us as well as to them.

But, says one, "Suppose you fail in this work:" and, sir, were we to fail, it would still be more glorious and honourable to attempt, than, with some sober-minded persons, to fold our arms, and suffer perishing myriads to cry for help in vain. We will go farther. Perhaps in some of our objects we shall fail. We neither promise ourselves nor others all the success we hope. Duty is ours; events belong to God. The Divine Being seldom accomplishes even our own purposes in our own way. His wisdom is not to be directed by human views; and he works out his plans by our disappointment, that no flesh may glory in his presence. But though we may fail in particular purposes, we cannot fail in the general result. Our labours, though not connected with the Divine plans in our own way, are yet connected with them. We can do nothing in vain. Every thing must have its effect; and, though unseen to us, must prosper. Our attempts may seem sometimes to be lost; and we ought to prepare ourselves for such apparent disappointments; but they will be lost only as some streams are lost in the earth. They run on their course invisibly, till they unexpectedly break forth again into day, and give verdure to the fields.

I conclude, sir, with expressing my confidence, that when the veil of mortality is withdrawn, and the value of immortal souls shall be more clearly demonstrated than can be done in this present state, when the realities of heaven and hell shall appear unshaded before us, not the most zealous among us, no, not the missionary himself, who wears out health and life in his work, will think he has done too much to promote the salvation of the souls of men.

While Mr. Watson was attentive to the official duties connected with his circuit, and ready to afford assistance in forming missionary societies, he was also mindful of the claims of private friendship. The following letters, which he wrote during his residence in the Wakefield circuit, contain some important sentiments, and serve to illustrate his personal history. The former of them shows that his health was still delicate, and that he was subject to serious attacks of illness.

To Messrs. Makinson and Watkin, of Manchester.

My Very Dear Friends Makinson and Watkin,—If you have not received an epistle from me, it was not because I was inattentive to my engagement, or insensible to the pleasure of corresponding with

friends so highly regarded; but because I have not been able, after repeated efforts, to turn logic into a subject of correspondence in the mode we devised. I have two unfinished letters by me, on different plans; and one contains no less than three folio pages, of demy size, of illustrations, chemical and botanical, where I could find them, of being, substance, modes, ideas, &c. But, after all, though I amused myself, and perhaps impressed the distinctions of Aristotle upon my own thoughts, I could not perceive the possibility of a plan of communicating together in our logical studies, to any valuable purpose. After we have got through logic, and enter upon metaphysics, I think we may do it to much profit, by proposing difficulties, and requiring illustrations. For perhaps it may be better to take many things for granted now, in order to get acquainted with the terms and subtleties of the art, than to stop and examine them step by step. Otherwise, many questions arise out of every chapter in logic; and I had, in fact, penned down some; but I thought them premature. Having, therefore, given up my letter on logic, and yet being anxious to hear from you, and to be heard also. I purposed to write a friendly line, to say that I had not been guilty of inattention, and to express my hope that your plans had been more successful. I have been, however, for a few days prevented from this by a severe fit of sickness. To-day makes the seventh day of my absolute confinement, from a fever, the result of cold; and logic and languages have been suspended by libations and refrigerants. I write, even now, against advice; but the pleasure of thinking of the parties addressed will, I am sure, outweigh the inconvenience which may arise out of the act of writing.

You see how God continues to deal with me;—graciously, if that word of his be true, "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth;" and there is no truth in God's holy book that I believe more firmly. To him, therefore, I am laid under a new obligation; because, in his intent at least, a good has been proposed, whatever the real effect may be upon me. With this exception, I have gone through the work of the circuit without any omissions; though owing to my taking a succession of colds, with some difficulty.

You will be charmed with the country, when you come over at Christmas; for even then I think it will have some power to please. The leaf will be withered, and the flower have been cut down; but the firm tree itself will grace the hill, and the swell of mountain and dale will still diversify the landscape. Thus may virtue continue with us, when we can command the stay of grace and ornament no longer; and thus, in the winter of affliction, may the great principles on which all true happiness is built remain unshaken; and the less reason will there then be to regret a change in circumstances and objects which flourish and fade without any necessary connection with the best state of our best nature, in time or in eternity.

Great languor obliges me to draw to a close. You have my best wishes; and if they can avail you, my prayers too. They may promote my union with you, if they have not much power with God. Let me share in yours. Persevere, my dear friends, in the path which the example and precepts of Christ exhibit. To improve our minds in the most excellent knowledge of him, and thus to grow in grace, in wisdom; to beg of him that animating Spirit, which only can give

energy to knowledge, and draw forth its influence upon the will and affections; and, in subservience to these ends, or at least not in contradiction to them, to explore, as time and talent may enable, the mysteries of human science; and to cultivate those social tempers which stand in the next rank to religious character;—these are some of our principal duties and best ends. He that succeeds best does best; and in this work there is no hazard. We can command success; for the peculiar prerogative of good men is,—and it is assigned by One who uses no unmeaning compliments,—"Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Write to me soon; and if you can, send me a plan of communication upon logical subjects; and I will gladly attempt to follow it. We shall certainly expect you both at Christmas. Mrs. Watson joins me in affectionate remembrance.

This letter appears to have been written in the month of November, 1813.

To Mr. William Makinson, Manchester.

My Very Dear Friend,—Knowing how zealously you are opposed to innovations, and particularly to such of them as tend to introduce new modes of thinking and speaking upon religious subjects, I send you the following arguments against the substitution of "who" for "which" in the invocation of the Lord's prayer. They are taken from an old Gentleman's Magazine for 1754, and, consequently, scarce. I can only give you the bare arguments, without the amplifications.

1. The application of "which" to persons is pure English. This appears from all our old writers; and from "which" being used in this sense in the liturgy, in the translation of the Bible by Wickliffe, by Cranmer, in another in Queen Elizabeth's time, and in our present translation.

2. The writers of the liturgy, and the translators of these Bibles, knew the English language.

3. The Latin relative *qui*, and the relatives *il quali*, and *le quel*, in the Italian and French, are applied both to persons and things.

4. It may be doubted whether "which" be so purely a relative as "who" is, but rather an elliptical way of speaking; *e. g.* the words, "Being the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli," Luke iii, 23, I conceive may be filled up thus: "Being the son of Joseph, *which Joseph* was the son of Heli;" in which case you cannot, with any tolerable propriety, substitute "who" for "which." So in the prayer, "Our Father," &c, the full locution would be, "Our Father, which Father art in heaven."

5. From hence, I conjecture, arose the expression, "the which," which, though not elegant, cannot be denied to be pure English. This phrase, when used of a person, which it is sometimes, is manifestly demonstrative, and requires the supply of the preceding proper name; and, in that case, you cannot substitute "who," and say "the who." In Hearne's Antiquities you have "which Walter."

6. There are other cases in which "who" cannot be used for "which;" as, "unto which of all us," 2 Kings ix, 5; and "which of you," &c, Luke xiv, 5. *Valet propositio.*

To this, our good friend, a writer replies in the next Magazine, that though "which" may be used when we speak of a third person, and perhaps may be justified as an ellipsis, yet when it is part of an invocation, it would be improper. *E. g.* "I will call upon the Lord, which is worthy to be praised," may be filled up, "which Lord is worthy to be praised;" but if we say, "I will call upon thee, O Lord, *which Lord* art worthy to be praised," the impropriety is apparent. "Which Lord" can never be a part of an invocation, being in the third person.

To this gentleman the advocate for "which" rejoins, that "which" can be applied to a second person appears from Acts xv, 23: "The apostles send greeting unto the brethren *which* are of the Gentiles. We have heard that certain men," &c, "have troubled you," &c. See also Acts i, 24; and Rom. ii, 23; in which latter passage it is evident that the scholars of that age understood the expression, "which teachest," and "that teachest," as tantamount and equally pure.

So far my author. The sum of the whole, I think, is, that the best authorities among our old writers support the application of "which" to persons as well as things; and though it should, in the improved state of language, be imposed upon us to discriminate in the use of "who" and "which," yet that will not justify the alteration in the repetition of the Lord's prayer, any more than it would justify it in reading it from our translation; for if we admit of oral amendments *ad libitum*, then you may sometimes hear a preacher in your pulpit addressing himself in his prayer to "the Father of lights, in whom there is no *parallax or tropical shadow*;"* or giving out his text, "A certain *gentleman* had a vineyard;" or demonstrating by the violence of his action, that the curse is fallen upon him, and that he "eats his bread by the *perspiration* of his brow;" or threatening that, if you are lukewarm, he will "*emit* you from his mouth."

To conclude. I hope soon to see you, *which* will give me great pleasure. I have not time now to write to Mr. Watkin; *which* Mr. Watkin did send me a pamphlet, for *which* I return him my thanks.

CHAPTER VIII.

Restoration of Peace in Europe—Mr. Watson's Sermon on that Occasion—Missionary Societies formed in various Places—Mr. Watson's Zeal in the Missionary Cause—Diversity of Opinion concerning Missionary Meetings—Decision of Conference on the Subject—Influence of Missionary Meetings upon the Methodist Connection—Mr. Watson's Conduct in his Circuit—Reproof to an impatient Hearer—Removal to the Hull Circuit—Opening of a new Chapel in Hull—Mr. Watson's Usefulness—His Views of congregational Singing—Letter to Mr. Walton, of Wakefield—Missionary Meeting in London—Letter to Mr. Walton—Tale of Robbery—Death of Dr. Coke—Mr. Watson opens the new Chapel at Newark—Attack upon him in one of the Hull Newspapers—His Letter in self defence—Letter to Mr. Walton—Mr. Watson's Conduct as a Colleague—Providential Deliverance.

WHILE Mr. Watson was diligent in the discharge of his ministerial and pastoral duties, alive to the spiritual necessities of the heathen, and not forgetful of the claims of private friendship, his loyal and patri-

* This translation, it will be recollected, was proposed by Gilbert Wakefield.

otic mind could not be indifferent to the circumstances of the nation. The times were more than ordinarily eventful. The war which arose out of the French revolution seemed to be hastening to a crisis, and the resources of this country were in a great measure exhausted. This fierce and tremendous conflict had been maintained for many years, at an immense expense, both of treasure and blood; and almost every continental nation had been a scene of devastation and carnage. But a brighter day was beginning to dawn upon Europe; and the man who had long been a terror and a scourge was about to become an object of pity, and, after the example of the Macedonian madman and the Swede, to

> "Leave a name at which the world grew pale,
> To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

In the spring of the year 1814 the emperor of Russia and the king of Prussia entered Paris, at the head of their victorious armies; while Wellington, who had annihilated the French power in Portugal and Spain, was approaching the same capital in an opposite direction. Napoleon, who had been completely vanquished in the field, was sent into exile; the Bourbon dynasty was recalled to the throne of France; and the peace of Europe was restored. The general joy which these events occasioned was indescribable; the interposition of Providence was almost every where acknowledged; and a day of public thanksgiving to Almighty God was appointed by the government of England. As Bonaparte was dethroned, there appeared no probability of the renewal of hostilities; and hence a peace, at once profound and permanent, was anticipated. Mr. Watson preached on this joyful occasion, both at Leeds and Wakefield; a service for which he was well qualified, by his sound political principles, his accurate knowledge of public affairs, and his habits of discriminating and philosophic thought; and, in compliance with the wishes of his friends, he committed his discourse to the press, under the title of, "A Sermon, preached at the Methodist Chapel, Wakefield, and at the Old Chapel, Leeds, on Thursday, the seventh day of July, being the day appointed for a General Thanksgiving to Almighty God, for the Restoration of Peace. Published by Request, 1814." This discourse is every way worthy of the author. It contains many just and striking sentiments; and not a few passages which are remarkable for their powerful and commanding eloquence.

In reference to the principle of patriotism the preacher says, "I am, I confess, no admirer of that universal civism, that citizenship of the world, which under the pretence of extending kind feelings to all men, would extinguish our partialities for our own country. This kind of philosophy may sneeringly ask, why I should love the people on the other side of a river, or a chain of mountains, more than those on this side? my own countrymen more than others? The question may be answered by another, 'Why should I love my own family more than others?' Heaven designed it, and formed our natures for the reception of such particular affections. They arise from associations of ideas which cannot be controlled without the most unnatural violence. But as my particular affection for my own friends is no reason why I should

hate others, the warmest patriotism is not at all irreconcilable with universal charity."

With regard to the national honour which was left unstained at the termination of the war, Mr. Watson says, "Peace is a blessing which we have in common with other nations, our allies; but this we have peculiar to ourselves, that we never, like them, co-operated with the enemy of the repose of the world in his aggressions upon the rights and peace of mankind. Either from force or choice there is not a state, freed in the last struggle from the grasp of France, which has not stained its character, by joining, at some period of the contest, with that ambitious power to bind the yoke upon the neck of its neighbour. All have in turn marched in the track of the tyrant, and in different degrees shared his guilt. But as to ourselves, it is an inspiring thought, and one that calls for our gratitude, that we have been preserved from this infamy. Our strength and wealth have been employed to rescue nations, not to oppress them; we have been their refuge, not their rod. By the blessing of God, and the prayers of the faithful, we have gone through the contest, and are come out of it with a high and unstained character; and if character be strength, the peace is doubly endeared to us by the consideration, that it presents this to us among its other exhibited blessings. This is the valuable legacy we shall leave to the next age; and we trust even in this to derive the most important advantages from it. We hope the influence created by the character and conduct of this country will be employed to control animosities, and to make the peace permanent. That it will be exerted in favour of the enslaved African, till a system of robbery and murder, so long the reproach of Christendom, shall be eternally and universally abolished; and that it will, in no ordinary degree, aid the attempts which are so generally making, by the Christians of Great Britain, to evangelize the world."

The abolition of the accursed traffic in human beings is thus touched upon: "The interest we are now taking in the universal abolition of the slave trade cannot fail to remind us, that, during the conflict, and while we were under the rod of God, we renounced as a nation all participation in that detestable traffic. That it was ever sanctioned by our legislature constituted a great national offence; a blot broad and black upon our statutes and our character. This only can be said in palliation, that the atrocities of that system of outrage were for a long time unknown to the body of the people. The scenes of its barbarities were laid in distant lands, or on the lonely ocean. The shriek of terror extorted by the appearance of the man hunter was given to the mountain winds; and the murmurs of the sufferer, as he was dragged across the waters, were uttered only to the waves. The islands whose ancient solitudes were disturbed by the sounds of the manacle and the lash were visited by few but the interested; and the miseries of an injured portion of our race were thus kept from the public view. When, however, by the activity of men, whose names are ever to be honoured, the wrongs of Africa reached our ears, and were spread before our sight, they successfully appealed to those principles which Christianity had implanted in the country; and after a struggle, not long but sharp, with wicked selfishness and stupid ignorance, the cause of humanity triumphed. Now no inhabitant of Africa lifts up enchained hands to

us, to say in the meek but piercing language of reproach, 'Am I not a man and a brother?' Certainly our joy at this reflection is damped by an unhappy article in the treaty; yet the public and the legislature have both freed themselves from all participation in the act. The friends of humanity have acquired even from this additional energy to press to the completion of all their hopes; and we doubt not but the spirit manifested and sustained in Great Britain on this subject will eventually remove this reproach from Christendom, and proclaim an eternal jubilee to the continent of Africa."

In concluding this truly eloquent and patriotic discourse, Mr. Watson adverts to his favourite subject,—the spread of Christianity in pagan lands. "Do we shudder at the idea of the rekindling of the torch of discord, and the renewal of the devastations of war? Is it the earnest wish of our souls that the peace may be eternal; that the sword may gleam in the eyes of men no more; and that the earth may never more be moistened except by the dews of heaven; that the final reign of the Prince of Peace may commence, and 'quietness and assurance for ever' become the lot of man? We all can contribute something to these glorious results; and it is our duty to contribute all we can toward them. Let us first support the influence of religion in our own hearts, and light up a brighter lustre of truth and holiness in our example. Let us endeavour zealously and in the spirit of meekness to counteract all immorality in our respective neighbourhoods; and to promote the salvation of others by our advice, our influence, and our prayers. Let us become the fervent advocates and active supporters of all such institutions among us as are directed to the reformation and instruction of our country; of schools, of Bible and tract societies, and of home missions. Let us go farther; let us be unwearied in carrying into effect the great plan of evangelizing the world, which the charity inspired by the Gospel has dictated to the minds of British Christians. By these means we shall best promote universal peace; the peace of nations, the peace of families, the peace of individuals; peace with each other, peace with ourselves, peace with God. For purposes of this kind we can depend but little upon political arrangements. The world can only be made happy by the diffusion of moral principles; and the Gospel only can effectually diffuse them. Go, then, system of mercy! Take to thyself the wings of our beneficence, and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth. Go on thy errand of love, sped by our bounty and our prayers. Confront the misleading errors of false religion and banish them from human minds. Go, testify to every fallen child of Adam, that God is love. Bear thy message of mercy every where and say, 'Whosoever will, let him come and take of the waters of life freely.' We have 'peace on earth;' but go and breathe thy soft and peaceful spirit into men's hearts. Teach kings moderation, and their subjects order; destroy the causes of war in their fountain, the human heart; and bring the desolations of the world to a perpetual end! Go, from conquest to conquest; and may thy triumphs never end while there is a nation on the globe to bless, or a soul among its countless myriads to save! To God, the author of peace, be ascribed glory and dominion for ever. Amen."

In the cultivation of this spirit of universal charity Mr. Watson was not peculiar. Many months were not suffered to elapse, after missionary

societies had been formed in the Leeds, Halifax, Hull, and Sheffield districts, before similar institutions were organized in York, Beverley, Bridlington, Patrington, Bingley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Cornwall. The people were impatient to unite their energies for the furtherance of the cause of Christ in heathen countries; and were unwilling to wait till the judgment of conference should be ascertained respecting this new mode of raising pecuniary supplies. Mr. Watson lent his very efficient aid at several of these places, in conjunction with his friend Mr. Bunting, whose zeal and energy were equal to those of his distinguished associate, and justly entitled him to the highest praise. At Newcastle Mr. Watson's sermon was thought to surpass that which he had delivered at Leeds; and many persons united in requesting its publication. This, however, he peremptorily refused; and at the same time he stated to a friend, that he repented of having published the sermon just mentioned; as he had been heartily ashamed of it ever since it had appeared in print. So humble were the views which he entertained of his own abilities, that while every one wondered at his powers both of thought and expression, and hung upon his lips with silent admiration, he seemed to be unconscious of any thing peculiar in himself; and the attention of his mind was entirely absorbed in the great work of extending the knowledge of Christ to the ends of the earth. His conviction of the perilous state of the heathen, of the obligation of Christians to attempt their conversion, and of the certain success of the measures then in operation, was deep and influential. The cries of the heathen seemed to be perpetually sounding in his ears; his heart yearned over the millions of souls perishing in ignorance and sin; it seemed to be one great business of his life to rouse the Christian community with which he was united to a sense of their duty in regard to the unenlightened part of mankind; and in these truly Christian labours he every where met with a willing people,—a people in this respect prepared of the Lord, and ready, both of their abundance and penury, to cast into the offerings of God. All that seemed to be generally necessary was, to call their attention to the subject, and to make arrangements for receiving their pecuniary contributions with frequency and regularity.

The cordiality with which many of the preachers lent their assistance at that time reflected the highest honour upon their piety and benevolence. The Rev. Messrs. James Wood, Reece, Atmore, Warrener, Brownell, Highfield, Morley, Naylor, Isaac, Buckley, Burdsall, Waddy, Everett, Pilter, and others, were particularly distinguished in this labour of love; and several excellent laymen were equally active in the good cause. Of these Messrs. Thompson of Hull, Holy of Sheffield, Dawson of Barnbow, and Scarth of Leeds, were among the foremost to advocate and support the blessed work. Some of these early friends of the Methodist missions are fallen asleep; but the greater part remain to this day; and their zeal has suffered no abatement.

In the meanwhile, these proceedings, so novel in Methodism, excited in some quarters much conversation, and great searchings of heart. Every one applauded the object, and acknowledged the necessity of increased exertions for the support of the old established Methodist missions, and the desirableness of commencing similar operations of mercy in other countries; but several, even of the preachers, enter-

tained serious doubts respecting the means which were employed in the present case. Some thought that missionary meetings were more calculated for display, than utility and godly edifying; and that they would generate a sort of religious dissipation, and a spirit of unhallowed levity. Others thought that by giving such pre-eminence to the missionary cause, the resources of the connection would be almost entirely directed to that one object; and that the several departments of the work of God at home would languish for want of the requisite support. The preachers, therefore, who lent their assistance in forming societies, and took a prominent and influential part in holding public meetings, were regarded with suspicion and jealousy. The chief responsibility rested upon Mr. Bunting, who was then a comparatively young man, and was the chairman of the Leeds district, where these novel proceedings had been commenced. He and his brethren were conscious of the purity of their motives; the facts which they witnessed in every place where missionary societies were formed only served to convince them that they were acting under the direction of Divine Providence; and they waited with no painful alarm for the assembling of the conference, when the opinions of their brethren would be declared. The urgency of the case they deemed a full justification of the measures which they had adopted; and the encouragement which they received in various quarters inspired them with confidence. Dr. Coke received intelligence of the meeting at Leeds before his final embarkation; and addressed a letter of acknowledgment to his friend Mr. Bunting, in which he expressed the highest satisfaction with the course which had been pursued. The Rev. Walter Griffith, who was then the president of the conference, and Mr. Benson and Dr. Adam Clarke, men of leading influence in the body, declared their cordial approbation of these pious and honourable exertions.

The conference met, as usual, at the end of July; and the missionary meetings which had been held in the course of the year became a subject of discussion. After an explanation of their character was given, and the arguments for and against them were heard, the conference adopted the following resolutions:—

"We strongly recommend the immediate establishment of a Methodist missionary society in every district in the kingdom, (in which it has not been already accomplished,) on the general plan of those societies which have been formed in Yorkshire and elsewhere during the past year.

"The thanks of the conference are given to those of our preachers in the Leeds, Halifax, York, Sheffield, Cornwall, and Newcastle districts, who have been concerned in the formation of Methodist missionary societies; and to all the members and friends of the said societies, for the very liberal and zealous support which they have afforded us in this important department of the work of God."

In consequence of these seasonable resolutions, missionary societies were progressively formed in all the districts in the kingdom; these were followed by branch societies in the several circuits, by associations in connection with the different chapels; by juvenile societies and ladies' associations; and the formation of these institutions, and their anniversaries from year to year, brought into full and profitable exercise Mr. Watson's great talents as a preacher and an advocate of

foreign missions. They presented to him such a career of useful and honourable toil as few men beside himself have ever been called to run, and which ended only with his life. This was a kind of labour which he had not previously anticipated; and his readiness in obeying the voice of Providence and of the Church, which so often severed him from his family and his studies, affords a striking illustration of his self denial and pious zeal. When missionary meetings became general among the Methodists, the great body of the preachers were expected to take a part in them; and the men who had formerly contemplated them with disapprobation soon acknowledged their utility. It was interesting in many places to hear even aged and venerable men publicly retract their former opinions. One of these is remembered to have said, before a vast assembly, in his curt and emphatic manner, "God was in these meetings, and I knew it not."

The establishment of missionary societies, and the holding of public meetings in connection with them, formed the commencement of a new era among the Wesleyan Methodists; and the full benefit resulting from them it would be impossible to estimate. By these means authentic information respecting the state and character of heathen nations, and the progress of the Gospel in the world, has been widely extended; in the minds of thousands the conviction of the truth and value of Christianity has been deepened; the sympathies and prayers of multitudes have been called forth; the blessedness of giving to pious and benevolent objects has been very extensively realized; the pecuniary contributions have been greatly augmented, in consequence of which new missions have been formed, old establishments reinforced, tens of thousands of heathen children instructed in the truths of Christianity, and many wretched savages and idolaters civilized, converted, and saved. The leaven of truth has been deposited in various places, where it did not before exist; and there is every reason to hope that it will ferment and spread to the latest generations. Missionary intelligence is extensively circulated by the agency of collectors; and even the peasants, and children belonging to Sunday schools, have become acquainted with the religious and moral history of the most distant tribes and nations, and talk about them with perfect familiarity. The generality of the Methodist societies, in all parts of the united kingdom, feel themselves allied to converted negroes in the West Indies, to the pious Hottentots and Caffers in South Africa, the Hindoos and Ceylonese, and the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands. During the lapse of twenty years these meetings have lost none of their interest; and they are still generally regarded as seasons of holy joy; for they call into exercise the best feelings of which the human heart is capable, —the love of God and the love of man. From the time at which missionary societies and meetings were sanctioned by the conference, the Wesleyan connection has assumed a character more decidedly missionary than it had previously done; and from year to year the work of God abroad has fully kept pace with the progress of that work at home.

No individual minister in the Methodist body, nor perhaps in any denomination of professing Christians, has been more distinguished by laborious and successful zeal in the cause of missions, and of Christianity generally, than the Rev. Robert Newton. The probability is,

that he has at least taken twice as many journeys, and collected twice as much money, for pious purposes, as any other minister of the age. Often was he associated with Mr. Watson in these most benevolent and useful labours.

Mr. Watson's preaching became increasingly acceptable in the Wakefield circuit to the time of his removal. Almost every sermon that he delivered contained some profound and original views of Divine truth; and the ability with which he was accustomed to defend the great doctrines of Christianity, and the power, fidelity, and affection with which he pressed them upon the belief and practical attention of his hearers, all tended to strengthen their attachment to his ministry, and augment his congregations. Nor did he labour in vain. The grand design of preaching was realized to a considerable extent. Many believers, by his instrumentality, were edified in faith and love; and several individuals were converted from the error of their way, saved from sin, and brought into the Church. At this day, some of the most pious and exemplary members of the Methodist society in Wakefield acknowledge him as their father in the Lord. To young people of education, belonging to religious families, he was rendered specially useful. He conversed with them respecting their reading; and introduced them to different branches of study and knowledge, particularly the study of astronomy and botany. He showed them the traces of wisdom and design which are observable in all the arrangements of the vegetable kingdom; and he taught them to sanctify every pursuit and employment by the word of God and prayer. To many families he was a frequent and a welcome visitant. He sympathized with them in their trials and afflictions; and his cheerful spirit and intelligent conversation were to them a perpetual source of hallowed joy and instruction. It is needless to add, that a man so esteemed and beloved was sincerely and generally regretted, when, in the course of his itinerancy, he was finally removed from the circuit. The writer of this narrative succeeded Mr. Watson in Wakefield; and during the two happy years which he spent in that place, he found the people continually referring in their conversation to Mr. Watson's character and ministry. These were topics of which they seemed never to be weary; and the emotion with which they often spoke showed the depth of the impression which his sermons and conduct had made upon their minds. During his stay in Wakefield he formed a very cordial friendship with Mr. William Walton; a man whom he found every way worthy of his fraternal love. Several valuable letters addressed to this excellent man will be found in the subsequent parts of this narrative.

The following incident, which occurred in Wakefield, will show the readiness and effect with which Mr. Watson could administer reproof when it was deemed necessary. One Sunday morning he had not proceeded far in his discourse, when he observed a man in a pew just before him rise from his seat, and turn round to look at the clock in the front of the gallery, as if the service were a weariness to him, and he wished to give the preacher a hint that he should speedily bring it to a conclusion. Mr. Watson observed the unseemly act; and said, in a very significant manner, "A remarkable change has taken place among the people of this country in regard to the public services of religion. Our forefathers put their clocks on the outside of their places of worship,

that they might not be too late in their attendance. We have transferred them to the inside of the house of God, lest we should stay too long in his service. A sad and an ominous change!" And then, addressing the man whose rude behaviour had called forth the remark, he said, "You need be under no alarm this morning: I shall not keep you beyond the usual time."

At the conference of 1814 Mr. Watson removed from Wakefield Hull; a town endeared to him by early and interesting recollections. To this place he had been accustomed, in his boyhood, to accompany his father on the Sabbath, for the purpose of attending the worship of God, and the ministry of his word; and here religious impressions had often been made upon his youthful mind. His father, who used then to lead him by the hand, and at whose side he walked to the house of prayer, was now no more. Mr. Milner had also gone the way of all the earth, and his pulpit was occupied by other men; but here he found Mr. Lambert, the dissenting minister, from whose lips he had formerly heard the truth; and, with a feeling which reflected honour upon him both as a man and a Christian, he cultivated the friendship of that excellent servant of Christ, and acknowledged his obligations to him for his faithful instructions and admonitions. It is not often that such impressions, made before the world engages the attention, and the heart is hardened through a course of sinning, are entirely obliterated; and when they lead to a state of established piety, the remembrance of them is highly salutary and refreshing. During Mr. Watson's stay in Hull Mr. Lambert died; and Mr. Watson preached a sermon on the occasion in the Methodist chapel. After paying a just tribute of respect to the memory of the pious dead, he spoke of the spiritual benefit which he, in common with many others, had derived from a ministry at once evangelical, devout, and saving.

Mr. Watson's colleagues in his new appointment were Messrs. Jonathan Barker, Henry S. Hopwood, and John Scott; men who enjoyed both his confidence and affection. Few places have been more favoured in regard to religious advantages than the head of this circuit. For many years the duties of the Christian ministry have been discharged in Hull, in some of the churches and the dissenting chapels, with a power and efficiency seldom surpassed; and hence a general respect is paid to practical godliness by all classes of the community. Mr. Benson had been twice stationed in Hull; and his preaching was signally owned of God, in the conversion of men from sin to holiness. During the time of his first appointment he was a means of the erection of the spacious chapel in George-yard; and till a very late period, many exemplary Christians in that town acknowledged him as their father in the Lord. When Mr. Watson was appointed to that station, the Methodist ministry had been regularly exercised there upward of half a century, and the society had become numerous and influential. It contained many families of respectability, and individuals of property and character; among whom was the late Thomas Thompson, Esq., at that time a member of the senate, and an example of primitive piety, simplicity, and zeal. In the year 1814 the Methodists had three moderately-sized chapels in the town; but these were insufficient to contain the congregations already formed; and hence a fourth chapel, of much larger dimensions, and of elegant architecture, had been be-

gun during the preceding year, and was then in a course of erection. Some persons censured the undertaking, as too bold and costly; but the parties engaged had formed their calculations upon correct principles, and proceeded in the execution of their plans in the spirit of a pure benevolence, and in reliance upon the blessing of God. The event most amply justified their previous conclusions. Few chapels of equal elegance and magnitude have, in so short a time, so fully realized the hopes of their projectors, either in regard to pecuniary returns, or the attainment of spiritual good.

This noble edifice, which was erected in Waltham-street, was opened for the public worship of God, on Friday and Sunday, October 7th and 9th; when sermons were preached on the occasion by the Rev. Messrs. Bunting, Watson, Newton, and Burdsall. The chapel is ninety-four feet in length, and eighty-four feet six inches in width, including the wings, in which are the gallery stairs. It is calculated to seat upward of two thousand people; and when the pews and aisles are crowded, to contain more than three thousand. Seven hundred free sittings were left for the poor. In its external appearance this chapel is highly ornamental to the town; and at the time of its erection it was not excelled in the Methodist connection for size, the symmetry of its parts, or the beauty and simplicity of its decorations. It was equally creditable to the taste and science of the architect, Mr. Jenkins, of London; and to the society by whose zeal and liberality the requisite funds were supplied. The interest excited in the town on this occasion was deep and extensive, especially on the Sunday evening, when it was thought upward of four thousand persons crowded into the new chapel. Many hundreds were unable to obtain admission; and these, with the congregations in the other chapels, which were open at the same time, amounted, it was believed, to upward of eight thousand people, who on that memorable evening left their homes to attend the worship of God among the Methodists in Hull. Immediately after the opening of this house of prayer, every sitting was let; and a large and respectable congregation regularly attended its religious services, both on the Sunday, and the week-day evenings. To this result the ministry of Mr. Watson mainly contributed; and many families previously unacquainted with Methodism, principally through his instrumentality, were permanently attached to this place of worship. At no period of his life does his preaching appear to have been more powerful, or to have exerted a stronger and more extensive influence upon the public mind. His sermons, marked by a force of reasoning and a persuasiveness almost peculiar to himself, embodying the great and vital truths of Christianity, and delivered with earnestness and pathos, were a means of reclaiming many a wanderer from God, of conveying strength and comfort to many a broken heart, and of stimulating believers to "go on unto perfection."

As the house in which he resided was contiguous to the chapel in Waltham-street, he considered the congregation and society connected with that place as his special charge; and though his labours were not successful to the extent of his wishes, he had the high gratification to witness the prosperity and spread of true religion. One Monday evening, when he was preaching in this chapel, an unusual power attended the word; and several persons wept aloud. At the close of

the public service he retired into the vestry, where many of the congregation followed him, inquiring, "What must we do to be saved?" The cries of those who were convinced of sin were loud and piercing. For a moment he seemed to be stunned, and asked one of the class leaders, who was standing by, "What shall we do, brother?" "Let us pray to Him who can save," was the answer. Without uttering another word, he kneeled down by the side of the penitents, and continued to intercede with God in their behalf, pointing them at intervals to the sacrifice of Christ, and encouraging them to put their trust in him, till three of them obtained the inward witness of their acceptance in the Beloved, and were enabled to rejoice in the pardoning mercy of God. Several whole families, by means of his preaching, were brought under religious impressions; and many individuals were induced to become regular hearers at the different chapels, who were previously accustomed to spend the Sabbath in worldliness and folly. He greatly rejoiced in distinct instances of ministerial usefulness; and when they were withheld for any length of time, he mourned, and subjected himself to severe searchings of heart. Christ crucified was eminently the theme of his ministry during his residence in Hull; and while he expatiated on the wisdom of the redeeming scheme, the glory of Christ's person, the infinite merit of his atonement, and his willingness to save a world of ruined sinners, a stillness like that of death usually pervaded the congregations; and each would have said to his neighbour, had he given utterance to the feelings of his heart, "How dreadful is this place!" Were we to estimate the sum of his usefulness in Hull, solely by the number of actual conversions which were known to be effected through his instrumentality, we should greatly err. The influence of his ministry was felt in many quarters where it was never acknowledged; and it operated in a thousand ways which cannot now be traced. Almost every person in the town, who made any profession of religion, heard him at one time or another. Even his week-night congregations in the principal chapels were unusually large; frequently amounting to eight hundred or a thousand people. Infidels were held at bay by his forcible argumentation in defence of Christianity; and they were forced to confess, from what they saw in him, that the most vigorous understanding, and a conscientious belief of revealed religion, are perfectly consistent with each other. Socinians often quailed before him, while he placed the sceptre in the hand of the Son of God, and the crown upon his head, and with all the energy that truth inspires, called upon every knee to bow before him, and every tongue to confess his eternal power and Godhead. The Divinity and atonement of Christ were subjects on which he delighted to expatiate; and the manner in which he applied these vital doctrines of Christianity conveyed conviction, and comfort, and purity, to the minds of many of his hearers.

He had a high sense of the solemnity and decorum with which the public worship of God ought always to be conducted. Of choirs of singers in different chapels he deliberately, and on principle, disapproved; and he was of opinion that they had greatly injured the psalmody and devotion of the Methodist congregations. He thought that an organ, properly managed, was preferable to a number of small instruments; but his desire was, that musical instruments in general should be superseded, and the congregations surrendered to the

guidance of a pious and judicious leading singer. That the singing department of the worship of God should be governed by the whim, and desecrated by the pride of vain and worldly men, he deemed impious; and, as a means of neutralizing an evil which he could not effectually cure, he frequently dictated the tunes that he wished to be sung to the particular hymns which he had selected. For this he was well qualified by his fine taste in music, and his intimate acquaintance with the principles of the science; and to this day, in the remembrance of his friends in Hull, his favourite hymns are associated with his favourite tunes. "Our people," he would sometimes say, "are a devotional people: they love psalmody; and were they not hindered by the trifling of the choir, they would produce the finest congregational singing in the world."

The following letters, which Mr. Watson wrote after he had been a few months in Hull, will show the strength of his affection for an excellent family in Wakefield, whose friendship he had cultivated. They contain, also, painful notices of the delicacy of his health, and of the consequent pain and langour with which he prosecuted those labours which excited so much attention, and by which multitudes of people were greatly benefited.

To Mr. William Walton, of Wakefield.

Hull, December 6th, 1814.

My Dear Friend,—I ought to beg pardon for not acknowledging sooner the receipt of a parcel, containing a present of excellent cloth. Accept my best thanks. As I wear it I shall be reminded of my old and favourite friends, with whom I feel a union, not to be broken off, I hope, in this life; but which, I trust, will be renewed and continued in the kingdom of our common Lord for ever.

I am concerned to hear that Miss Ann is indisposed. I hope the indisposition will prove only transient; and that the whole of her heavenly Father's dispensations will be abundantly sanctified. Present her with my kind regards, and best wishes that she may feel an increasing union with the Divine and inexhaustible Fountain of all our light, and comfort, and salvation. How great is the mercy, that he is ever nigh to them that fear him; and that in sickness and health, joy and sorrow, life and death, he is all and in all to his people!

A letter from London gives an account of the missionary meeting held on Thursday. It seems, they began at six o'clock at night; thus putting that off to the shades of the evening, which ought to have been done in broad day, and proclaimed on the house tops.

Excuse haste. I hope to see you at the time proposed; and, in the meantime, I can only pray that the best blessings of heaven above, and of earth beneath, may rest upon you and your respected family. I shall probably spend not more than a few hours with you when I come through. I have engaged to open the new chapel at Newark, on the 8th of January; and I can get there from Manchester by three routes; by Sheffield, by Nottingham, or by Wakefield.—Which of them I shall take I have not yet determined.

Please present my love to the preachers, and to all friends.

The missionary meeting here referred to was held in the City-Road chapel, December 1st, 1814, for the purpose of forming a society for the London district, agreeably to the direction of conference. Dr. Adam Clarke presided on the occasion; and the Rev. Messrs. James Wood, Benson, Bradburn, Entwisle, Jenkins, Edmondson, Sutcliffe, Thomas Wood, M'Donald, and Buckley, with several lay gentlemen, lent their assistance. It was the first missionary meeting ever held by the Methodists in the metropolis; and it is probable that doubts were entertained as to the possibility of securing a sufficient attendance, if it were held in the course of the day. The evening was therefore chosen, that the meeting might not interfere with the claims of business. Subsequent events, however, have amply demonstrated, that the Methodists of London are as ready to devote their time and property to the cause of missions as their brethren in the country; and that the estimate which was then formed of their zeal originated in misconception.

Something, it appears, occurred to prevent Mr. Watson's visit to Wakefield at the time proposed; and hence he addressed the following letter to the same valued friend toward the end of the month:—

To Mr. William Walton.

My Dear Friend,—I have received a kind intimation of your wish that I would not omit paying you a visit, as proposed before the Manchester meeting was postponed. Now certainly I do not require much pressing to visit Wakefield, which, you know, is a very favourite place; and especially your house, which is still more so. I am obliged to visit Manchester on some private business; and had intended to go directly through by the mail from Hull; but as I hear you are indisposed, and it is a charity to visit the sick; and, secondly, as you have repeated the invitation; and, thirdly, as I am myself unwell, and shall be glad of a day or two of relaxation, for I am truly worked down; I will do myself what I assure you will be a very great pleasure, —I will, all being well, and if it please God, be with you on Monday, the 2d of January; and then proceed to Manchester on Wednesday or Thursday; and thence, by Nottingham or Doncaster, to Newark.— Were I to go by Leeds, I could not reach you till Tuesday; but I propose going on Monday morning by the Sheffield coach, as far as Rawcliffe, whence I can get a conveyance to Pontefract. Now, as I am not in good walking condition, if I could so far trespass on your goodness as to send the gig for me there, about twelve o'clock, I should be with you early in the afternoon. The gig might meet me at the same inn, in Pontefract, where we once took a lunch, in one of our botanical excursions; for you have not, I suppose, forgotten rambling among the hedges and ditches for good specimens. If this should not be convenient, it is no matter. I can either walk from Pontefract, or get some conveyance. Do not put yourself to any inconvenience whatever.

I am truly sorry to hear that you have had another of your winter attacks. I, too, have been an invalid for more than a month; though I have continued in my work. May we consider these as the kind corrections of the Father who loves us, and is still, both in the cloud and the sunshine, carrying on his purposes of mercy!

I find you have a tale of my being robbed, and getting £150 by it. Truly, I should have no objection to be robbed in such a way; but there are no such golden showers for me, who seldom profited much by the doctrine of chances. The fact is, we have had the same tale current here respecting Mr. Atmore, at Halifax, with this difference,—that in the change of coats, he got £600; and I, always behind you see, only £150. I have seldom any thing to be robbed of, but my life; and no man can take away that till He pleases who gave it. This neighbourhood is, however, greatly infested by desperadoes.

This will reach you about the new year. May it be a year of the greatest happiness, peace, usefulness, and improvement to you all!—Wishing you every blessing of time and eternity, I must leave off and fall to work. I have three occasional sermons to preach before I see you: one on Saturday, one on Sunday afternoon, and one on Sunday evening; beside my regular work in the town and neighbourhood.—The friends here are most unmerciful folks; but I will shake them off at four o'clock on Monday morning, when the coach leaves.

Thursday noon.

The tale of robbery, upon which Mr. Watson here descants in his humorous manner, which was then extensively current, was, that in returning to Hull late in the evening, after preaching in a neighbouring village, he was met by a highwayman, who, after taking from him his money and his watch, demanded his coat, giving him his own, which was old and shabby, in exchange; and that Mr. Watson, on his arrival at home, found in the pocket of this worthless garment the sum of £150. This, however, proved, like many other marvellous reports, to be only an ingenious fabrication.

Toward the end of the year 1814 the melancholy tidings of Dr. Coke's death reached England, and created very painful feelings in the minds of the friends who were then exerting themselves in the length and breadth of the land to support the missions of which he had long been the patron and director. He died suddenly at sea, on the 3d of May, it is supposed in a fit of apoplexy; and the missionaries whom he was conducting to India, and who placed an entire reliance upon him as their counsellor and guide, were left to the resources of their own minds; or, rather, were thrown absolutely upon the care of Divine Providence. On their arrival in India they obtained the requisite pecuniary supplies from W. T. Money, Esq., of Bombay, who kindly met their wants on the faith of the Methodist connection in England; and they entered upon their work in Ceylon in the true spirit of Christian missionaries, and with encouraging prospects of success. Their case excited a powerful sympathy in India, and among the friends at home; and the death of Dr. Coke caused a deep and general sorrow; not on his own account, (for no one doubted of his final blessedness,) but because it was felt that both the Church and the world had lost a tried and an efficient friend. Mr. Watson shared in the common feeling; and rendered justice to Dr. Coke's character in a funeral sermon which he preached at Hull on the mournful occasion. In missionary zeal and enterprise Dr. Coke had long been far in advance upon the connection to which he belonged, and upon the generality of British Christians; and this part of his character Mr. Watson was specially

qualified to hold up to public view in a manner the most advantageous.

At this period Mr. Watson's extraordinary talents as a preacher were extensively known and appreciated; and numberless applications were made to him to assist at missionary meetings, to open new chapels, and to plead the cause of schools, and of various local charities. His engagement to preach at the re-opening of the Methodist chapel in Newark, after it had undergone considerable enlargement, he mentions in his letters to Mr. Walton. This visit to the scene of his early labours, after a lapse of nearly twenty years, he greatly enjoyed. In reference to this journey, and his subsequent visits to that neighbourhood, Mr. Eggleston of Newark says, "The high respect entertained for Mr. Watson, by the friends in Newark, induced them to invite him to preach at the opening of their enlarged chapel; and he most cheerfully complied with their request. His preaching was eminently acceptable and useful; and his kind, sensible, social, and pious conversation; his affability toward those who were not connected with Methodism, but who attended the missionary meetings, and partook of a friendly meal with him, at the house of his host; rendered his visits a blessing to all who were favoured with his company. From a conversation I had with him, when attending one of our missionary meetings, he appeared very anxious to pay a visit to some of the villages where he had laboured when he was a local preacher; and promised, if I would accompany him, to take a circuit through those interesting fields of his early ministry. At the same time he inquired after several of his associates, the local preachers who had shared with him in the honourable toil."

While Mr. Watson was absent from home in the winter of 1815, about the time when he visited Wakefield, Manchester, and Newark, a base attack was made upon him, in one of the Hull newspapers. On the Sunday evening before his departure, he had preached a very impressive sermon on Belshazzar's feast, in which he described the wretched situation of an epicure, who might, like the Babylonian monarch, be arrested by death in the midst of his unhallowed pleasures. The sermon was one of a series of discourses which he was then preaching in the Waltham-street chapel. It happened that a gentleman in Hull had recently died under painful circumstances; and some person in the congregation, who had not the honour to give his name, nor the candour to make any inquiries on the subject, assuming that the sermon had a reference to that deceased individual, censured Mr. Watson in terms the most harsh and insulting, and held him up to public reprobation, for making the pulpit a vehicle of calumny, and availing himself of his office as a Christian minister to wound the feelings of bereaved families and friends. A person under the signature of "Justitia" defended him in his absence; and on his return to Hull he addressed the following characteristic letter to the editor of the "Rockingham:"—

Hull, Feb. 28th, 1815.

Sir,—I was not a little surprised, on the appearance of your last week's paper, to find myself very unhandsomely and rudely charged with having, in a sermon lately preached at Waltham-street chapel, "made very unseemly allusions to the character of a gentleman lately deceased;" in a word, with having represented him in life as an epicure,

and at death "taking a leap in the dark." Had your correspondent, sir, asked me for an explanation, I could have satisfied him; but he appears to be one of

> "Those whose fancies skip
> From the head unto the lip;
> And, scarcely resting, skip again
> From the lip unto the pen;"

and that without much intervening labour of thinking. I owe your correspondent nothing but the feeling which folly excites; but I think I owe it to the public, and to the friends of the deceased, to say, that, at the time when I preached that sermon, I knew no more of the deceased than his name, and the fact of his death: nothing of his character, good or bad. If your correspondent chose to misunderstand me, I am not surely responsible for his mistakes. Though I engaged to preach, I did not engage to give him understanding. I have not, sir, I hope, to learn from him the proprieties which become the pulpit; and my own heart, I flatter myself, is a sufficient guard against offending those proprieties in the manner charged upon me. Sacred be the charities which hover over the memory of departed friends! In the contest which the moral teacher wages against the vices of men, it is not necessary to strew the arena with the ashes of the dead.

I might, in justice, expect from your correspondent an apology for this uncharitable attack upon me; were not his censure and apology alike indifferent to,

Sir, your most obedient servant.

After reading this dignified and just rebuke, the officious correspondent of the "Rockingham" perceived that he had mistaken both his own character and that of Mr. Watson; and if ever he again strayed on a Sunday evening into the Waltham-street chapel, and heard things which were above his comprehension, whatever his surmisings might be, he confined them to his own breast, and suffered no more of his lucubrations to appear in print.

Early in the spring of this year the anxieties of Mr. Walton were excited in behalf of a young man who was under sentence of death for felony in one of the southern counties of England. He had known and esteemed some branches of the family to which this unhappy youth belonged, and was very desirous of saving his life; and for this purpose used every means in his power to obtain for him a commutation of punishment. Mr. Watson, it seems, applied to Mr. Thompson, of Hull, who interceded with government, and besought them to spare the man that was appointed to die. Every application, however, proved unavailing, and the culprit endured the extreme penalty of the law. Before his execution he addressed a letter to his kind friend at Wakefield, in which he gave every sign of genuine penitence; and there was hope in his death. A copy of this letter Mr. Walton forwarded to Mr. Watson, accompanied by one of his own, in which he gave farther information respecting the person whom he had endeavoured in vain to save. To the letter of his friend, Mr. Watson returned the following answer:—

To Mr. William Walton, Wakefield.

Hull, April 29th, 1815.

Dear Sir,—Yours I received with pleasure, and would have written by Mr. Wood, but that I had no time. I perused the copy of poor ——'s letter with thankful feelings to that God who willeth not the death of a sinner. There seems no doubt of his having died as we could wish him to die. How mysterious are the ways of Him who cannot err! Your anxieties and kind endeavours to save his life were frustrated;—perhaps mercifully frustrated; for had he lived, he might have gone on still in his trespasses. The body was given to death, that the spirit might be quickened and saved. You have nevertheless the pleasure of reflecting that you "did what you could." The event was the Lord's; and he, in this, as in every case, "hath done all things well." Mr. Thompson has been, and still remains ill; when he is better, I will show him the letter, and he will rejoice with us.

It is Saturday night; and to-morrow is the Sabbath of the Lord. I must therefore apply to my preparations; not forgetting, however, when I bow before the throne, old friends and old enjoyments. I often think with pleasure on our Saturday night prayer meetings at Wakefield.—To-morrow morning early I perform the melancholy duty of laying the first corpse in the vaults of our new chapel; a respectable member of our society, who was with us at the missionary meeting, and all the services connected with it, in the same chapel. So precarious is life; so soon may our Master call! May we be found ready, at our post, and in our work; and what then is death?

"——'Tis life's last shore,
Where vanities are vain no more;
Where all pursuits their goal obtain,
And life is *all retouch'd again;*
Where in their bright *results* shall rise,
Thoughts, virtues, friendships, griefs, and joys."

Please present my affectionate remembrances to your respected family, the preachers, and all friends.

I am yours very affectionately.

At the conference of 1815 Mr. Watson was returned a second year to Hull; and his colleagues were the Rev. Messrs. Isaac Turton, William Naylor, and Henry S. Hopwood. They laboured together in harmony and love, and had the high gratification of seeing the work of God in a state of growing prosperity through the circuit.—The following account of this part of Mr. Watson's life has been kindly supplied by Mr. Naylor:—

"I had the honour and happiness of being appointed to labour with him in the Hull circuit, and as our residences were near each other, our intercourse was frequent and free; and in regard to myself it was truly profitable. It was our custom, with our colleagues, to spend one forenoon in the week in discussing some selected subject in divinity, when his richly-stored mind would unfold and illustrate the important doctrines of the Gospel to our edification; and frequently we knew not which to admire most, the luminous statements which he made, or the humility with which they were given,—the teacher generally personating the earnest inquirer.

"In Hull he was greatly esteemed by the pious of all denominations, who availed themselves of the opportunity of attending his ministry; and his powerful and evangelical discourses were not merely admired, but felt, and rendered specially useful. I have frequently thought that, as a preacher, he never surpassed what he was in those days. His sermons were closely studied; and having then greater bodily vigour than he possessed in the latter years of his life, they were delivered with an energy which increased the interest they were so well calculated to produce. His labours were not in vain in the Lord. Not only were believers comforted and edified, but sinners were convinced of their guilty, depraved, and miserable condition, and effectually turned to God, under his ministry. My surprise was, that their number was not greater. When I have heard his convincing statements concerning the evil and fearful consequences of sin; his powerful appeals to the conscience; and his encouraging addresses to the penitent, to draw near to God through the mediation of Jesus Christ; I have thought that we should surely hear of many conversions.

"There is reason to believe that the disease which terminated his life existed, if it had not its commencement, during his residence in the Hull circuit. He complained of a pain in his side. This was so severe, that he could not bear the exercise of riding on horseback, which was our usual mode of conveyance to the distant places in the circuit. He was exceedingly punctual in attending his appointments; and therefore performed many long journeys on foot, even in the middle of winter, and upon very indifferent roads; for he could not endure the thought of a Methodist preacher neglecting a congregation, when he was expected; and he felt very keenly if any one supposed him capable of doing so from indifference."

While in the Hull circuit Mr. Watson narrowly escaped with his life in one of his pedestrian journeys into the country. For several years the preachers had been in the habit of visiting Marfleet on the week-day evenings;—a small village in Holderness, on the banks of the Humber, where they had a society and congregation. The road to this place being then circuitous, foot passengers were accustomed to shorten the distance, by walking across the fields, which are surrounded by deep drains; and over these some narrow planks formed the only bridges. When returning from this place one stormy winter's night, Mr. Watson missed the path, and wandered about for some hours, exposed to the storm, and in no small danger of perishing in the drains, which were then filled with water. As the night advanced his family and friends became alarmed; and Mr. John Thompson, at whose house he was expected to sup on his way home, set out with a lantern in quest of him. Mr. Watson, in a state of great exhaustion, saw the light approach; and believing it to be the sign of his deliverance, sent in answer to his prayer, stood still till he was able to hail its friendly bearer, who was overjoyed to find that he was the honoured means of saving so valuable a life. Mr. Watson, who was completely bewildered when Mr. Thompson appeared, always regarded this deliverance as the result of a providential interposition.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Watson visits London to assist at a Missionary Anniversary—His Sermon in the City-Road Chapel—Missionary Anniversary at Hull—Extract from the Report—False Alarm—Difficulty in preparing for the Pulpit—Mr. Watson's Removal to London—Appointed one of the General Secretaries to the Wesleyan Missions—Manner in which he discharged his official Duties—Letter to Mr. Edmondson—Letter to Dr. Ellis—Letters to Mr. Garbutt—Extracts from the General Missionary Report for the Year 1816.

At this time Mr. Watson's fame as a preacher, and especially a preacher on public occasions, was circulated far and wide; and his services, as an advocate of Christian missions, were in general and urgent demand. The friends in London applied for his assistance at the anniversary of their district society in the spring of 1816; and, in compliance with their request, he preached in the City-Road chapel on the morning of the 25th of April. The Rev. William Jones, the editor of the New Evangelical Magazine,* who had been acquainted with Mr. Watson in Liverpool, had given so high a character of him, as to induce the attendance of a large number of dissenting ministers; and as the missionary anniversary was held during the sitting of the annual district meeting, when the Methodist preachers belonging to all the neighbouring circuits were present, nearly the whole of the front gallery was occupied by ministers. Mr. Watson felt the importance of the occasion, and experienced no ordinary degree of trepidation in contemplating the task which was allotted him. He paced the vestry of the chapel in a state of considerable agitation; and when he was informed that the time for commencing the service had arrived, he said, with an expression of strong emotion, "Seasons of this kind require strong nerves, and great assistance from above." That assistance he ultimately received in an eminent degree; although he was so affected that he partly lost the recollection of the topics which he intended to serve as an introduction to his discourse. The sermon was founded upon 1 Cor. xv, 25, "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." The subject was the mediatorial government of Christ, viewed especially in connection with the universal spread and establishment of Christianity in the world; and the sermon altogether was one of his happiest and most successful efforts. It is scarcely possible to conceive of argumentation more lucid and powerful, sentiments more sublime and impressive, imagery more beautiful and varied, and diction more rich and appropriate, than those which characterized this wonderful discourse. As he overcame his embarrassment, and entered into the subject, his own heart became deeply impressed with its truth and momentous results; his countenance expanded; and the effect upon the congregation was irresistible. Much had been expected from him;—

* A correspondent in Hull had said, in one of his communications, "We have now an admirable preacher here, of the Methodist persuasion, a Mr. Watson, very deservedly popular. The new chapel in which he officiates is supposed to be the handsomest in the kingdom, not even excepting your chapels in the metropolis." To this Mr. Jones added, "The editor can from his own personal knowledge, fully subscribe to this verdict on the talents of Mr. Watson. He ranks among the ablest preachers in the kingdom."

"Yet when at length the clear and mellow base
Of his deep voice brake forth, and he let fall
His chosen words like flakes of feather'd snow;"

and when every successive topic which he introduced rose in interest and grandeur; a breathless silence pervaded the whole assembly; the people seemed to be all but their attention dead; the powers of the preacher were forgotten in the magnitude and sublimity of the theme, and when the protracted service concluded, every one seemed to feel as the parent of mankind felt when he had been listening with amazed and delightful attention to the strains of angelic eloquence, describing the creation of the universe by the almighty Son of God:—

"The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he awhile
Thought him still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear."

One peculiarity attended all Mr. Watson's occasional sermons, as well as his ordinary ministry,—admiration of the preacher was only a very subordinate feeling among his hearers. Every one, of course, was impressed with the greatness of his talents and genius; but, excepting the merely sentimental hearers, who were equally deficient in piety and in sound judgment, and whose attention was directed to nothing but figures of speech, the congregations were so much affected with the subjects which he brought before them, as to be almost incapable of thinking of any thing else. These were exhibited in a light so impressive, and their practical bearing was so distinctly and forcibly urged, that the devout part of his hearers especially were deeply humbled under a sense of their deficiencies and neglects, and retired from the house of God lamenting their past indifference, resolving to be more faithful for the time to come, and retiring into secret to ask pardoning mercy from God, and grace to enable them to fulfil their numerous obligations.

Mr. Watson declined to publish the sermon which he preached in the City-Road chapel; and no outline of it was found among his papers after his decease. The following account of it, and of the occasion on which it was delivered, was given by Mr. Jones in the periodical work which has just been mentioned:—"The whole of the discourse was strikingly appropriate to the cause of missions; and the preacher never for a moment lost sight of the important object of the meeting. As this sermon, according to our judgment, possessed no ordinary degree of excellence, it would afford us pleasure to present our readers with something like an epitome of it, but the very attempt disheartens us. We feel how much injustice we should unavoidably do to the preacher, while we should be as far from satisfying ourselves. Those who would form any just estimate of Mr. Watson's pulpit talents must hear him for themselves. His popularity, unlike that of many of the present day, is not founded upon the ignorance of his followers. It is not the gracefulness of his action, the modulations of his voice, nor the harmony of his periods alone, that arrest the attention of his hearers, and make them listen to him with delight. In none of these, indeed, is Mr. Watson deficient; but he possesses other pulpit excellences of a still higher order, which may be truly said to lay the basis of a solid popularity, and which confer upon the former a kind of crowning effect. These are a discriminating judgment, an understanding highly culti-

vated, an intimate acquaintance with the sacred writings, enlarged and liberal views of things, and a happy facility of communicating his ideas to others. Mr. Watson is not a dull declaimer; there is nothing of pedantry about him; he disdains 'to amuse the skittish fancy with facetious tales.' He can, it is true, be plain and familiar, where plainness and familiarity are proper; but he can also soar to the heights of sublimity. His mind is richly stored with sentiment; and few men possess a happier talent at conveying that sentiment to others. It is some years since we had heard Mr. Watson preach; but though we looked for great things from him, we frankly own that he has surpassed our expectations. We were glad to find that the interval of half a dozen years had contributed toward maturing his judgment, and perfecting his qualifications as a preacher; so that we found ourselves fully justified in the favourable testimony which we lately gave of Mr. Watson. We observed several of the London ministers, of different denominations, present on this occasion; probably induced to it by what we said of the preacher; and, if we might be allowed to draw any conclusion from the expressions of marked satisfaction which they evinced in their whole behaviour, we should say that they were not disappointed.

"Entertaining, as we do, but little doubt that the committee for managing the concerns of the mission will prevail on Mr. Watson to publish his sermon, we are indeed the less solicitous at present about giving any report of its contents; but it may gratify the impatient curiosity of some of our readers to be furnished with the mere outline of this admirable sermon. Some pertinent and striking observations on the nature of the Christian dispensation,—its prophetic character,—and the profound and intimate acquaintance which the Apostle Paul had with it in all its ramifications, introduced the discussion of the text; to illustrate which, the preacher proposed the consideration of three particulars;—the 'enemies' which Christ will ultimately subdue,—the nature of that dispensation which is termed his 'reign,'—and the certainty of his eventual success.

"The enemies of Christ, Mr. Watson justly remarked, are all of them the enemies of the happiness of man; and these he classed under the following subdivisions:—Satan and his angels,—sin,—false religions, under every form and shape,—and all civil governments that set themselves in opposition to the interests of his kingdom, by persecuting his people, and endeavouring to check the progress of his Gospel in the world. After illustrating each of these particulars, he proceeded to delineate the characteristic properties of Christ's reign, which he judiciously distinguished from his providential government of the world; remarking, that it was an administration conferred upon him by God the Father, in consequence of his having finished the work of redemption, and in virtue of which 'all power was given unto him, both in heaven and on earth,' agreeably to Matthew xxviii, 18. He therefore considered it under the threefold view of a reign of mercy,—a reign of vengeance,—and a reign which does not supercede the freedom of the human will.* The discussion of these topics brought the preacher to

* The expression used by Mr. Jones is, "a reign of moral suasion;" but Mr. Watson remarked to the writer of this narrative, when he read this account of his sermon, that "moral suasion" was a phrase which he had never used in the pulpit in the whole course of his life.

the last head of his discourse,—the grounds of the assurance which we have that Christ will ultimately triumph over his and over all his people's enemies. This certainty of success he was proceeding to argue from the numerous prophecies contained in Scripture, concerning the extension of his kingdom, and the promises made to him of having the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession: but waiving a particular detail of the prophecies concerning the reign of the Messiah, and the universal extension of his kingdom, the consideration of which would occupy more time than could be allowed, he confined himself to the argument arising from the Deity of Christ, as involving in itself an assured ground of confidence to us, that he will finally subdue all his enemies; and that his kingdom shall come with power, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In this part of his sermon Mr. Watson took occasion to advert to the conduct of the Socinians, who are unwearied in their efforts to 'rob the Saviour of the brightest diadem in his crown;' at the mention of which the soul of the preacher seemed to take fire; and, rising into the boldest strain of animation, he reprobated their sentiments, with merited indignation, in a fine tone of impassioned eloquence. This brought him to the winding up of his discourse, in which he displayed the full force of his genius, and gave ample proof of transcendent talent. He collected into one general view the happy results of the Messiah's reign, which believers anticipate as shortly to be accomplished. The infernal powers shall be restrained from deceiving the nations. They have had their hour and the power of darkness; but the time is at hand when they are to be shut up in the bottomless pit. The Gospel shall spread throughout the nations, enlightening those that now sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Millions of the human race, now enslaved in sin, and sunk in vice, shall shake off their fetters, and rise to righteousness and life. Persecutors shall every where cease out of the land; false religions be for ever exterminated; and Christ shall universally reign, from the rising to the setting sun.

"But delightful and animating as these prospects are, they do not bound our hopes and expectations. The reign of Christ includes in it more than has yet been mentioned. 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;' and even that will be finally vanquished by the Redeemer: for 'he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.' When he hath perfected his work of grace and mercy on earth, he will come again the second time, without a sin offering, unto the salvation of all that look for him. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'

"These few imperfect hints may serve to give our readers some faint idea of Mr. Watson's sermon; but in justice to himself we must say, that it is a very inadequate notion which can be formed of it from any description that could be given of it, even by a much abler pen than ours. We have not the pleasure of any acquaintance with him, or we would entreat its publication, as being calculated, in no ordinary degree, to subserve the cause of missions; and though we did not perceive that Mr. Watson availed himself of any notes in delivering it, we are confident that he is sufficiently in the habit of committing his thoughts

to paper, to render it no difficult task for him to prepare it for the press; since such accuracy in the structure of sentences, as that which uniformly marks his preaching, is only to be attained by the practice of writing."

The venerable Joseph Benson, who was a profound divine, and one of the best preachers of either that or any other age, was unbounded in his admiration of Mr. Watson's sermon; and, in his intercourse with his friends, spoke of it in terms of the highest commendation. In the Methodist Magazine, of which he was then the editor, he says, "An excellent discourse was delivered at the City-Road chapel, by the Rev. Richard Watson, of Hull, from 1 Corinthians xv, 25, which excited unusual attention and interest. His vast compass of mind, grasping the whole mediatorial reign of Christ, and his peculiar and energetic manner of showing the subjugation and destruction of his enemies, could not fail deeply to impress the hearts of the listening auditory."

The public missionary meeting commenced at five o'clock in the evening of the day in which Mr. Watson preached at the City-Road chapel.—Thomas Thompson, Esq., M. P. was expected to preside; but, in consequence of unavoidable absence, his place was supplied by Dr. Adam Clarke. In an excellent letter of apology, Mr. Thompson stated, "It has been said, by an enemy to the British and Foreign Bible society, that a *Bible fever* has spread through the kingdom; and it is more than probable that it will soon be said, that a *missionary fever* is following it." The Rev. Walter Griffith, whose zeal in the sacred cause was most exemplary, in seconding the first resolution, in allusion to these words, acknowledged that he had "caught the missionary fever. The important work of missions occupied his whole frame, and thoughts, and prayers; and the disease which had thus affected him was a pleasant and blessed one." Mr. Watson delivered an admirable speech, in which he introduced a reference to the same subject. The following are the topics upon which he expatiated in his eloquent and striking manner:—"I hope the mission fever will not be intermitted, nor Satan invent a cure. Can ye not discern the signs of the times? The science of navigation is improved; but no heathens take advantage of that.—Christian nations have colonized heathen countries; but no heathens have colonized Christian shores. The reported purity of heathens is dissipated by reports of travellers. The lax notions of Christians about heathen salvation are giving way; and we agree to consider them as lost sinners. The attention of Christians is now happily turned from abstract principles and trivial topics to the great concern of heathen salvation. The union of Christians is an important fact in the common cause of Christianity. We cannot unite all denominations in the same society; but we can unite in spirit. The West India missions are peculiarly interesting. If ever liberty be given to every subject of the empire, Christianity must prepare them for that boon. The American and Newfoundland missions are important. In Newfoundland twenty thousand persons are living without religious instruction; and without the ordinances of God they will become pagans. Dr. Mason of New-York has remarked, that if America do not exert herself, there will be two millions of white heathens in the back settlements. The Ceylon mission is tried by the death of its agents; but a good missionary can neither live nor die in vain. We are thankful for the patronage which

we enjoy there; but the most exalted personages do not confer honour upon the missionary cause by the countenance which they afford it: they rather receive honour from their connection with that cause. Our work in Ceylon, as in other places, is an itinerancy. A chapel and Sunday schools have already been erected and established in that promising island. The Ceylon mission will be an important entrance to that part of the heathen world. There can be no doubt that every faithful missionary will be useful in one degree or another. The smallest contributions assist in the good work. A shilling may carry a missionary a mile; and by travelling that mile he may be a means of the conversion and salvation of an immortal soul."

During his residence in Hull, Mr. Watson was one of the secretaries to the auxiliary missionary society for that district. On his return from London he attended the anniversary of this society in Hull, and read a report which he had prepared. The following is the conclusion of this beautiful composition:—"The increased number of missionaries which are now employed, and the constant addition of new stations, will necessarily greatly advance the annual expenditure of the missionary fund; but the increased support which it will receive by the operation of missionary societies, and the zeal of their officers and friends, will, it is believed, enable the managing committee thus to extend their efforts without embarrassment. It is obvious, however, that every person embarked in a cause so interesting to the heart, so full of mercy to man, is called to be 'steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.' The fire which Heaven has kindled must be kept burning by human diligence; the hand which has been stretched out to relieve the spiritual necessities of dying men must be unwearied in its employ; and the committee have confidence that the efforts of the Hull district society will, under these impressions, be exerted with increasing zeal. All the motives which can press upon humane and upon Christian feeling remain in full force. Little, indeed, has been done, in comparison of what remains to be done, for the salvation of the world. The light spreads; but it is only as the morning on the tops of the mountains. Immense shades of darkness still remain, unpierced by the heavenly light. Large and populous empires still support the throne of Satan. The fanes of idolatry still defy the heavens; the worship of idols and devils still debases myriads of redeemed men; and desolation and misery still follow in the train of superstition, and curse the fairest portions of the globe. As inquiry more fully exposes the state of the heathen world, the scenes it displays are still such as fill the heart of the Christian with a deep and sorrowing sympathy. The honour of God, the disenthralment of man, still call for prayer and for exertion; and the success which has crowned the recent attempts of the Christian Church ought to be considered as the voice of God, sanctioning the work, and rousing to redoubled efforts. On this success, granted not only to the Methodist missions, but to those of every other denomination, the committee congratulate the society; persuaded that they have a common cause with Christ, and his servants of every name. Every where the Lord is making his 'work appear unto his servants, and his glory unto their children;' the Gospel is preached with 'signs following;' the 'Gentiles come to its light, and kings to the brightness of its rising;' the prelusive drops of that shower fall, which shall quench the

thirst of every unwatered desert; the cloud is but 'as a man's hand;' but it is the cloud of promise, the pledge of 'abundance of rain.' It must fill the ample concave of the heavens, and pour its blessings upon all the earth. 'I the Lord will hasten it in its time.'"

At this meeting the unfounded alarm was excited, of which Mr. Beecham has given the subjoined account:—

"The business of the public meeting received a serious interruption while Mr. Watson was speaking. Being called upon to move one of the resolutions, he produced a public paper containing some unfriendly strictures on the missionary operations in support of which the meeting was assembled; and while he was refuting the charges of the writer, an alarm was given that the chapel was falling. An indescribable scene of confusion immediately took place. A rush was made toward the doors, the approaches to which were speedily blocked up by the press of those who were nearest, while others made to the lower windows, through which they dashed, and threw themselves headlong into the chapel yard. It was soon ascertained on the platform that the alarm was groundless; and the Rev. Walter Griffith, who was in the chair, and others, endeavoured, though in vain, to allay the fears of the congregation, by assuring them that no part of the chapel had given way. Such was the noise, that their voices could not be heard at any considerable distance from the place where they stood. After some deliberation, it was agreed to resume the business of the meeting, in the hope that this proceeding would inspire confidence. The persons on the platform accordingly all took their seats, and turned their attention to the Rev. Robert Newton, who, addressing the chair, commenced an eloquent speech on the general subject of Christian missions to the heathen. This plan succeeded. Those who could not at first hear what was said, soon began to persuade themselves that the speakers had assuredly ascertained that the chapel was safe, or they would not have commenced again. Order was thus gradually restored, and the commotion finally subsided with far less disastrous consequences than might have been reasonably anticipated from such disorder."

There was too much reason to believe that this alarm was maliciously given; a loud crack was made in the gallery by means of some chemical preparation; and the man who had been guilty of this outrage immediately rushed out of the chapel as if he believed that it was falling. Mr. Watson's popularity and influence rendered him an object of envy and direct hostility in some quarters.

London was not the only place which Mr. Watson visited in the spring and summer of 1816, to assist at the formation and anniversaries of missionary societies. He received pressing invitations from several other parts of the kingdom; and such was the interest which he felt in the good cause, that, as far as his health and the claims of his circuit would allow, he never hesitated to meet the wishes of the zealous men who were like minded with himself on the subject of missions. Wherever he went his sermons and speeches left a most salutary impression upon the multitudes who were drawn together by the attraction of his name. He taught them the value of Christianity, as the medicine of life, and the sovereign remedy of human misery; and at the same time he so forcibly stated the obligations of the Church to send the Gospel to the heathen, as to awaken in many persons an

increased attention to their own spiritual interests; while the mission funds were augmented in every place where he pleaded the cause of the heathen. In the midst of all this popularity, his temper was highly devout and spiritual; he was often deeply humbled before God; and his mind was not unfrequently exercised by painful temptations. Sometimes it was with him a matter of extreme difficulty to find suitable subjects upon which to preach in the course of his ordinary ministry; and he was often considerably agitated, even before the congregations which he was accustomed to address. Once, in the Waltham-street chapel in Hull, his feelings were so excited, that he could not recollect the place where his text was to be found; and he was compelled to repeat the words without being able to specify the chapter and the verse. At another time, before the same congregation, he pronounced the benediction when he should have repeated the Lord's prayer.

The following anecdotes which have been kindly supplied by Mr. Garbutt, of Hull, will show the mental embarrassment to which Mr. Watson was occasionally liable, and the facility with which he could pursue a train of thought, when a subject in which he felt an interest was suggested to his attention:—"Notwithstanding his eminent attainments, he felt very much when he had to preach to our large congregations, and had often great difficulty in fixing upon a subject. I remember to have once called upon him at four o'clock, on a Sunday afternoon, when he had to preach at six in Waltham-street chapel. I asked him how he was; and he answered, 'I am as miserable as I well can be in this world. In the course of two hours I must appear before the congregation in the new chapel; and I cannot, even if it would save my life, determine upon a subject on which to preach.' In the meanwhile his mind was relieved; and when the time arrived he delivered one of his greatest sermons.

"On another occasion he was at my house; and in the course of conversation said, 'I have engaged to preach at the opening of a new chapel in Leeds; the time is drawing near; and do what I may I cannot think of a suitable text for the occasion.' I asked him if he had ever thought of Solomon's beautiful prayer at the dedication of the temple. He said he had not; and on referring to it, he was exceedingly struck with 2 Chron. vi, 40, 41: 'Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.' On reading these words his attention was immediately fixed; and for the remainder of the afternoon I lost the pleasure of his company. A train of interesting thought was presented to his view; his active mind was at work; he retired from the company; and he afterward read to me the greater part of the very copious notes of a sermon which he had founded upon that passage of Holy Scripture."

At the conference of 1816 Mr. Watson was appointed to the London east circuit, with the Rev. Messrs. Joseph Entwisle, Thomas Wood, John Riles, and George Marsden. His removal from his friends in Hull was a matter of mutual regret. By them he was highly esteemed; and to some of them he had formed a very cordial attachment; par-

ticularly to Mr. Garbutt and Mr. Ellis, with their kind families. During the two years which he spent in the Hull circuit he was both happy and useful. His frequent intercourse with Germans in that seaport led him to study the German language, with reference to the Biblical treasures which it contains; but it is probable that the number of his official duties, and the calls made upon him by friends in distant places, prevented him from bringing this branch of his studies to any very successful issue. On his arrival in the Hull circuit in the year 1814 he found one thousand seven hundred and eighty members in the different societies; and, by the blessing of God upon his labours, and those of his esteemed colleagues, he left two thousand. He found a commodious and expensive chapel in Hull nearly ready for opening, and considerable anxiety in some quarters as to the consequences of this erection; and he left a large and respectable congregation regular in their attendance upon the religious services which were conducted there. With a heart, therefore, thankful for past mercies and success, and painfully affected by separation from an affectionate people, many of whom were his children in the Lord, he repaired to the metropolis, where his duties were very onerous, especially considering the delicacy of his health and constitution. The circuit was extensive and laborious, comprehending what are now the circuits of City-Road, Spitalfields, and Southwark; and he was also appointed secretary to the Methodist missions; his zeal in the mission cause, his commanding talents, and the well-known fact, that he was an elegant and "a ready scribe," having pointed him out as eminently qualified for that very responsible office. Mr. Marsden, who was his colleague in the circuit, and in the missionary secretaryship, gives the following account of him at this period:—

"When we entered upon our work as missionary secretaries, it was agreed that I should conduct the foreign correspondence, and that Mr. Watson should undertake the home department. It devolved upon him to prepare the Annual Report of the state of the missions, all the periodical publications, the official correspondence with government, and every thing that it might be requisite for us to publish in relation to the missions. He entered on the work with ardour; and as that blessed cause, the conversion of the heathen, continued to extend, his views of its importance became more enlarged, and all his powers appeared to be engaged in its prosperity. Through the blessing of God the missions prospered abroad, and the pecuniary supplies for their support and enlargement, raised by the pious liberality of the friends at home, continued to increase. During the two years in which we acted together as secretaries, and the three following years, in which he continued in the same office, and I had to act as one of the general treasurers, I had frequent opportunities of witnessing his earnest desire to promote the interests of the Redeemer in the heathen world. Whenever the question of the establishment of a new mission, or the enlargement of one of our old stations, came before the committee, he was always ready to advocate the farther extension of the work, whenever there appeared a providential opening, and a probability of success. Though our funds were frequently exhausted, he relied confidently upon the providence of God for those supplies which would be rendered necessary.

"Frequently have I admired the accuracy of his judgment in suggesting the stations to which the temper, habits, talents, and acquirements of missionary candidates were adapted. When six or eight young men have been examined and approved by the committee, after being duly recommended by their respective circuits and district meetings, it has been a question of no ordinary moment, both in regard to themselves, and the work in which they were to be employed, in what particular parts of the mission field they should be respectively appointed to labour. In such cases I have almost invariably found that we might safely rely upon Mr. Watson's judgment.

"During the five years in which we were associated together in the mission work, and which frequently required much time and exertion, he never relaxed in regular ministerial labours. He generally attended his appointments in the circuit, both on the Lord's day, and the week-day evenings. All his powers, mental and bodily, were consecrated to the service of God.

"Connected with the duties of the ministry is the visitation of the sick; and even in those seasons of peculiar toil Mr. Watson was not inattentive to this part of his charge. With pleasure have I frequently heard of the very affectionate and useful manner in which he discharged this duty of the pastoral office. He spent sufficient time in his visits to enter calmly into conversation with the afflicted; endeavouring to gain a knowledge of the spiritual state of each person, that he might give suitable consolation and advice, and unite with them in appropriate acts of confession, supplication, and thanksgiving. To those who were in distress he was particularly kind and soothing; opening to their views the promises of God, the perfect atonement of Christ, the tenderness of the Divine mercy, and encouraging them to place an absolute reliance upon the Divine faithfulness and love. He led the sufferer to the foot of the cross, and taught him to rest fully and constantly upon the sacrifice and intercession of the Redeemer.

"When we were stationed together I also often heard of the very profitable and edifying manner in which he met the classes, at the quarterly renewal of the society tickets. He endeavoured in those meetings to get a knowledge of the spiritual state of each member; and with all fidelity and affection he gave to each his portion of admonition, counsel, or encouragement. In the various employments and duties connected with the work of the ministry he proved himself to be a man of God."

Mr. Watson's residence was in the parish of St. George's in the east, near Wapping; and a small room was then rented in the City-Road, for the transaction of the mission business. Thither he resorted daily for the discharge of his duties as secretary to the missions.

Soon after his arrival in London he was requested by his friend, Mr. Edmondson, then stationed in Worcester, to pay a visit to that city, for the purpose of preaching in behalf of one of the Methodist charities. The following is an extract from his letter in reply. It shows that he still retained a pleasing remembrance of the happy year which he spent in early life with that intelligent and friendly man in the Leicester circuit.

London, Oct. 8th, 1816.

It would give me pleasure to meet your views in coming to Worcester; not that I have any pleasure in preaching occasional sermons, for they are burdensome enough; but for the pleasure of your society, and that of your excellent family. I ever consider that I owe much to your friendship in a former period of life, and I shall remain gratefully sensible of it. It would give me pleasure to join the social circle, and "fight all our battles o'er again;" but it is the vanity of life, that our pleasures are not always at our command.

The following letters, which he addressed to his friends in Hull, will show the peculiarities of his situation; as well as his views of Methodism in London at that particular period. The state of society in the metropolis is such as to prevent that free and constant intercourse among religious people, which is so common in many country places. This circumstance arrested the attention of Mr. Watson, as it does that of almost every other man when he first becomes acquainted with the London Methodists.

W. C. Ellis, Esq., Surgeon, Hull.

My Dear Friends, Mr. and Mrs. Ellis,—To be silent is not to forget. Even the bustle of London, its novelties, its fatigues, and its distracting whirl have not so absorbed or diverted my thoughts, as to prevent me from indulging many musings on the past, as the luxury of those soft regrets which are felt by minds that can feel when the thoughts and friendships of other days return.

I am here a very insulated being, and am likely to remain so. You know there is no individuality in London. If there be kindred minds, they meet too seldom to become one. It requires many strokes from the smith to weld his iron, though both pieces may be of a proper heat. However, we almost always find things balanced by Providence. I have indeed no time for friendships here. From morning till night I am in duty; and at night am sometimes so weary, that they would be most interesting friends indeed (some such as I *have* known) who would keep me awake. If you ask me how I like London; I can only say that, as a place, I had rather be elsewhere, surrounded by the works of God, rather than those of man; where I could apostrophize with Virgil,—

Muscosi fontes, et somno mollior herba,
*Et quæ vos rarâ viridis tegit arbutus umbrâ;**

but as the centre of every kind of intelligence, it has its interest. As a Methodist I know all that passes in the connection, as an Englishman, all that is transacted in the empire, much sooner than I could know it elsewhere; and yet perhaps this pleasure is ideal; for news is news, though it be much "older than our ale," or porter either.—Methodism in London does not, I know, stand high in your opinion; but you saw it where it is certainly much lower than at other places. At City-Road we have a large and very respectable congregation; and also at Southwark; and though the congregation is not so respectable at Spitalfields, it is large and, for London, lively.

* Ye mossy springs, inviting easy sleep,
Ye trees, whose leafy shades those mossy fountains keep.—Dryden.

I have had, upon the whole, pleasure in my public labours; and much of the peace of God which passeth all understanding, along with active engagements. This is the best of all, to feel ourselves ever with God; and to pass through things temporal with the things eternal fully and constantly in view. For what is life? How unsubstantial till filled with those feelings and acts which connect it with the perfection of eternity, and turn it into the vestibule of the future spacious temple of being, through which we cannot pass, and from which we can never be excluded!

My engagements do not allow me to take many journeys, except in the immediate neighbourhood of town; so that I am not likely to be thrown into the way of a visit to Hull before your missionary meeting, for which I shall reserve myself, if I be spared. Till then I shall not have the pleasure of seeing friends whose remembrance will always call forth my best regards, and my earnest prayers for their best welfare.

To Mr. Robert Garbutt, Merchant, Hull.

St. George's, East, Nov. 4th, 1816.

My Dear Friend,—Should I apologize for not writing sooner, I might fill my paper with various reasons, some personal, some public, some philosophical, and others not at all so; let me then sum up the whole of them in one *negative:* it has not been for want of affection. The remembrance of my Hull friends will ever be dear to me; and I never think of you without associations of mingled regret and pleasure.

As self is always so near at hand, and is a subject never difficult to speak of, I may begin by saying that, as to *myself*, I have not been upon the whole so well in health, as I was at Hull; though I hope I have had my seasoning, and I begin to go through my work with more vigour. The mere circuit labour is not, I think, more than that at Hull; but our extra work is greater, and the walking is formidable. I have, for instance, to go regularly every day to the mission office, in the City-Road, about two miles from my house, and return to dinner. Then I have my evening walk to preach, sometimes two or three miles more. To this are to be added all the supernumerary walks which business or curiosity may call for. How much time I have for study and reading you may then guess; and indeed I have been obliged to turn the streets of London into a study; and sometimes fall into a reverie, at the hazard of being upset by a porter, or dashed on the pavement by some fiery charioteer.

Methodism in London is not what it is in Yorkshire. There wants zeal in the leading men; and their union is not so close as the communion of saints, and the prosperity of a Christian society, demand.—Our congregations are, however, usually good on the Sundays; but on the week evenings they are inferior to yours. However, I think the work is prospering upon the whole. I have had many seasons of enlargement and comfort in preaching.

You would see advertized on the November Magazine, that the pocket book would contain my portrait; but I neglected to sit in time, and so it could not be engraved. This arises from my indifference to *such honours*.

In the midst of general distress I fear Hull still supplies its share.

May all these sufferings teach us that remedies for national distress are only to be found in national amendment; and that righteousness alone exalteth a nation! May we, my dear friend, be more intent on the prize of our high calling! There are blessings which never cheat us; there is a good we can command; there is a peace ever flowing, and never exhausted. We are indeed living for eternity, and that is at hand! Let us trim our lamps anew, and pour their lustre on all around us.

We are all much as at Hull. Mrs. Watson joins in kind regards to Mrs. Garbutt and family. For every instance of your friendship and kindness my heart sincerely thanks you; and be assured I am, as ever, yours very truly.

P. S. Present my kind remembrance to Mr. and Mrs. Middleton, and all the preachers and friends.

The friends in Hull were very desirous of obtaining Mr. Watson's services at their missionary meeting in the spring of 1817. The following is one of his letters in reply to their invitation. It places in a striking light the cordiality of his friendship with some individuals in that town, and his strong affection for the people in general. It was impossible to treat him with respect and kindness without calling forth corresponding feelings in his pious and generous heart.

To Mr. Robert Garbutt, Hull.

14, *City-Road, Jan.* 21, 1817.

My Dear Friend,—The reason of my not answering was the best in the world; and one against which all the syllogisms of Aristotle would not serve to compound an argument: I had nothing to say.—And yet, strange as it may appear, I even now answer without being able to *reply*. The solution of this problem is, that our new plan is in making, and I shall not know my appointments for April till about a week hence. I can then *contrive*, and send my *ultimatum*, (to speak diplomatically,) both on the possibility of my coming, and the week in April when I can come most conveniently. I do not disguise that I wish to come; not to make a speech, for at that work I am a poor hand; not to preach a sermon; but to see those I have seen in Hull, and to feel what I have often felt during two of the happiest years of my life. Be assured I will not fail you, if I can avoid it; and I will write explicitly in a few days.

I thank you for the invitation to your house; but perhaps you recollect that I was previously engaged to Mr. Ellis; and when that matter was canvassed at your friendly table, when I was spending the evening with you, I proposed to settle the affair by dividing my time between you. In any case the matter will easily be settled between you; as I hope we shall have, during my short stay, as great an intercommunity among my particular friends of the two families as possible.

Present my kind remembrance to Mrs. Garbutt and family, to Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, and the preachers and friends

The first general report of the Methodist missions which it fell to the lot of Mr. Watson to draw up bears the date of 1816, and was pub-

lished about the end of that year. The facts which it details are of the most cheering kind; its diction is forcible and eloquent; and it bears throughout a character of devout exultation. The writer evidently "felt his inspiration in his theme;" and his facts and appeals are equally stirring. The liberality with which the friends at home furnished the pecuniary supplies called for thanksgivings to God, who thus disposed them to employ their property in his service; and the marked providential openings for missionary efforts in the heathen world, and the success which every where attended the dissemination of Divine truth, and especially in the island of Ceylon, where the mission had been but recently commenced, warranted the indulgence of the most sanguine hopes, and called for exertions still more strenuous and extensive.

During the year ending February 1st, 1814, the regular income of the Methodist mission fund was £6,820. 2*s*. 6*d*.; and by means of an extraordinary public collection, for the purpose of paying off arrears due to the treasurers, a farther sum of £2,464. 7*s*. 4*d*. was raised. A considerable part of this amount was applied to the spread of the Gospel in the more neglected parts of England and Wales, under the name of home missions. In consequence of the establishment of district societies, the holding of missionary meetings, and the employment of collectors, the report of the following year states that the sum raised for missionary purposes was £9,554. 4*s*. 4½*d*.; and during the period extending from August 18th, 1815, to June, 1816, the sum of £10,423. 10*s*. 9*d*. was raised by the friends of the Methodist missions, and placed at the disposal of the managing committee.

The report drawn up by Mr. Watson, after referring to the feelings with which the committee entered upon their labours for the year, speaks in the following strain:—"The favourable reception of the missionaries sent to Ceylon, the successes of their early labours, and their earnest entreaties for additional help, in order to avail themselves of those opportunities of promoting the cause of Christ which in every direction presented themselves, had given a new impulse to the missionary zeal of the Methodist societies and congregations. They saw that Methodist missions had a providential designation to the eastern as well as to the western world; while the additional light which was thrown on the wretched condition of the millions of Asia, by the communications of the missionaries, had more deeply awakened their sympathies, and kindled more ardent desires to make known to them the grace and salvation of the glorious Gospel.

"The lamented death of the late Rev. Dr. Coke had itself heightened those feelings. The work in which his soul had so greatly delighted, and in the prosecution of which he died, seemed to derive new interest from those retrospections to which the contemplation of his life, character, and labours necessarily led; and his loss, while it dictated the necessity of the exertions of the many to supply the efforts of one, diffused the spirit of holy zeal with those regrets which consecrated his memory.

"The formation of missionary societies, and the meetings held for that purpose, had also a large share in awakening a deeper and more general concern for the conversion of the heathen. Missions to various parts of the world had long been conducted by the Methodist confer-

ence, and supported with great liberality; and the West India mission in particular stands a noble monument of the faithful labours of the missionaries, and of the liberal support they met with at home; but by the operation of those societies, the deplorable state of the heathen was more fully displayed, the motives for the exertion of Christians were enforced, and the encouraging prospects of success in this great cause unfolded. Persons of all ranks of society had offered their service of time and money, and plans were adopted which promised a permanent and increasing supply for the support and enlargement of those benevolent undertakings, by which alone the blessings of Christianity can be fully communicated to mankind.

"The hopes which these circumstances excited in the committee have not been disappointed. Success, in different degrees, has crowned the labours of the missionaries; a number of suitable young men have devoted themselves to this department of the work of God; the attention of the committee has been called to new and important stations of great promise; the liberality of the public has enabled the committee considerably to increase the number of missionaries; and the spirit of Christian zeal which animates the bosoms of the numerous friends of the Methodist missions, expanded and corroborated as it is by the spirit of prayer, offered with increased ardour, and more direct reference to the success of missions, promises that permanence of principle, and activity of operation, which must issue, under the continued blessing of God, in the diffusion of the knowledge of Christ, with all its train of blessings, civil, religious, and eternal."

Having described, in order, the state of the several missions under the committee's direction, the report goes on to say, "During the last twelve months the committee have sent out nineteen additional missionaries to different parts of the world: four to Ceylon, one to Bombay, one to the Cape of Good Hope, four to the West Indies, two to Nova-Scotia, three to Newfoundland, one to Quebec, one to Gibraltar, one to Brussels, and one to France; making the whole number of missionaries employed on foreign stations, under the direction of the Methodist conference, eighty.

"These increased exertions have induced a considerable increase of expenditure; a circumstance which will occasion joy and not regret, so long as the means afforded by the increasing liberality of the friends of religion are prudently and economically expended. Thus to apply the funds entrusted to their charge, has been the constant object of the committee; and though many heavy expenses have occurred, especially in the Asiatic mission, yet these have arisen from the peculiar circumstances in which the first missionaries were placed; the great expenses of outfit, and the excessive cost of every thing which is necessary to the comfort of a European in India. Some of these expenses were, however, temporary and accidental; and now that the mission is assuming a settled character and system, though for some time its regular expenditure must be very considerable, its extraordinary demands will not, it is hoped, again rise to the same amount.

"The committee have to congratulate the subscribers in general on the increase of the funds. The receipts of the year have more than equalled the large expenditure, beside the payment of large arrears.—This the committee ascribe, under the blessing of God, to the operation

of missionary societies, adult and juvenile, formed in different parts of the kingdom; and carried, in some places, with great zeal, into full efficiency. Here the rich and the poor have met together; the aged, and the youth, and the child, have united in the service of Christ, and presented their offerings to his cause; and the committee trust that, wherever it is practicable, the recommendation of the conference of 1814 on this subject will be adopted, that the supply may be *constant* as the moral necessities of an unsaved world; and *increasing* as, by the providence of God, are the opportunities for communicating to it that only means of salvation, the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"To the effect of that greater publicity which has lately been given to the state of the heathen world by different means, and the enforcement of the obligations of Christians to extend the kingdom of their Lord, the committee also attribute that increase of missionary zeal which has this year furnished them with a full supply of missionaries for every station. Not less than twelve preachers, stationed in English circuits, and enjoying all the comforts and advantages of the home ministry, have offered themselves as foreign missionaries, exclusive of those who had previously acted only as local preachers. Of these several have already taken their departure for different stations; and the rest wait the call of God, and the direction of their brethren. Their piety, their talents, and in some cases considerable learning, give the best promise of future usefulness in all the departments of missionary labour; and the committee cannot refrain from calling upon the grateful acknowledgments of their friends, to 'the Lord of the harvest,' for thus 'sending forth more labourers into the harvest.' With the increase of the funds there has been also an increase of men suited to the work, and willing to embrace it. This is a coincidence which cannot fail to lead to the recognition of those evident indications of Providence, which now, more than ever, make it imperious upon us to go on in the name of the Lord.

"Increasing, however, as are our exertions, and those of almost every other religious denomination, the committee would still keep it impressed upon the minds of all who have so willingly co-operated with them in these attempts to spread the knowledge of Christ, that little has been done by any body of Christians separately, or by all collectively, in comparison of what remains to do. Active, united, and even formidable, as have been the movements of the Christian world, for some years past, against the kingdom of darkness and sin, only a few of its outworks have been won, and little more than mere facilities obtained for extensive conquest. While more than one half of the subjects of the British empire itself are pagans, every obligation of patriotism, policy, and religion, demands persevering exertions to circulate the vital principles of true godliness through every member of the political body, until an empire, fully Christianized, shall be presented to the eye of the world, exhibiting, as in the first ages of the Church, the glorious triumphs of the Gospel over the vices which deform, and the miseries which desolate, the fairest portions of the globe; and displaying, for the instruction and imitation of pagan Asia in particular, the beneficial effects of Christianity on the civil and moral interests of man.

"Were there even no other field for missionary labours than that

which is presented by the British empire, comprising so great a portion of India, and numerous Asiatic islands, a part of Africa, and the colonies of the western Archipelago, and of North America, the united efforts of all Christians for many years to come would find a large share of occupation; but beyond the bounds of the British empire, extensive as it is, and comprehending so many large and populous pagan countries, lie scenes of affecting moral misery. Immense shades of darkness still remain unpierced by a ray of heavenly light. Empires, composed of hundreds of millions of souls, still remain under the power of Satan; and the worship of idols and devils still robs 'God over all, blessed for ever,' of the worship due to his holy name by his redeemed creatures. While the world presents such an aspect, there is surely enough of wretchedness to keep alive our sympathies, and enough of sin to rouse into vivid operation the feelings of indignant jealousy for the honour of the Lord of hosts. The debt of the Christian world to the heathen remains undischarged. It has run awfully into arrears; and the favourable opportunities of access to every part of the pagan world are infallible indications that the Governor and Judge of the world, and especially of the Churches, now demands its payment. The successes of the missions of modern times are certainly not a discharge from the service, but the strongest incitements to pledge every energy anew to its holy objects. The efficiency of the Gospel has been again demonstrated in our own day in the conversion and salvation of heathens of every class, of every clime, and of every form of pagan superstition. Every missionary enterprise, if prudently, and, above all, if piously, undertaken,—if it be consecrated by singleness of view, and supported by prayer,—has a moral certainty of success. Every sign of the times indicates that the period is fully come when the outcasts of men shall be remembered, and they who are ready to perish shall obtain mercy. Pressing, therefore, as the state of affairs is, the committee are persuaded that the last retrenchment which any person alive to the glory of God, and the salvation of men, will make, whenever obliged to make retrenchment, will be the sums he has devoted, first, to the support of religion at home, and, second, to the natural and necessary consequence of the former, the extension of religion abroad. God calls, and his people follow. He who still goes on 'from conquering to conquer,' now more evidently puts himself at the head of his sacramental host. The battle is turned to the gate; and none, it is hoped, will be found treacherous to the grand and momentous struggle, none who will not wield his weapon in the war, or stretch out his hand to replenish the treasury. 'Signs of the Son of man,' signs of glory and conquest, transfuse a new vigour into the heart, and spread new prospects to the hopes of the righteous. 'Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth;' the light of the morning, on the tops of the mountains, catches the waiting eyes of those who sit in the shadow of death. The captive exile hastens that he may be delivered. 'The whole creation' of rational creatures, crushed beneath the accumulated weight of the tyrannizing superstitions of ages, 'groaneth and travaileth in pain to be delivered from the bondage of corruption.' All is preparation and movement. 'The rod of his strength is gone out of Zion,' and he must 'reign in the midst of his enemies.' His 'people,' too, are 'willing in the day of his power;' and nothing remains to give them their full share

in the blessing and glory of that victory, which is to re-assert the rights of God to the love and homage of a world of redeemed men, but that they be 'steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.' Their labour, directed by his word, and animated by his Spirit, cannot be in vain.

"The public will perceive that, according to the resolution of the last conference, the missionary fund has been applied solely to *foreign objects*, with the exception of a sum voted by the committee toward the expenses of the mission in the Irish language for the last year, and another for the support of the same object for the year ensuing. The importance of that mission, in affording instruction, in the native Irish language, to numbers of the inhabitants of the dark parts of Ireland, is the reason which has induced the committee to bring the expenses incurred by it upon the mission fund; as no other alternative presented itself, than to do this, or entirely to abandon a work which has already effected so much good. The committee, however, wish it to be understood, that its aid has been extended only to the six Irish missionaries who preach in the native language, and for that reason only. The other preachers in Ireland, who act as missionaries, and are called by that name, have received nothing from the missionary fund."

The excellence of these extracts is a sufficient justification of their insertion in this place, notwithstanding their length. As this was also the first general missionary report written by Mr. Watson, and written immediately after his official connection with the missions, it was requisite to quote somewhat largely from it, to show the spirit in which he entered upon his work, and the tone which he assumed in reference to it, when addressing the people by whom the cause was supported. From this time to the end of his life he sustained the office of missionary secretary; he was the writer of nearly the whole of the reports, from year to year; and it will be seen, by these memoirs of his life, that his zeal for the advancement of missions suffered no abatement; his hopes of success never flagged; and the interest of his annual reports rather increased than diminished till his heart and hand ceased to move.

CHAPTER X.

Attacks upon the West India Mission—Mr. Watson's Defence of that Mission—Speech at the Anniversary of the Bible Society—Conference of 1817—Mr. Watson's re-appointment to London—Letter to Mr. Ellis—Missionary Report for 1817—Mr. Watson preaches at the opening of a new Chapel in Oxford—Singular Adventure on that Occasion.

THE wisdom of the appointment of Mr. Watson to the office of missionary secretary was apparent to every one when his first report was put into circulation; and it was not less manifest when he was called, through the medium of the press, to defend the West India missions against misrepresentation and calumny. These missions had been begun under circumstances strikingly providential; and were prosecuted under the direction of Dr. Coke with admirable zeal and effect, and at a vast expense of money and life. Several of the planters were humane

men, and encouraged the instruction of their slaves in the principles of religion; for they found that the converted negroes were honest, and from a sense of duty discharged the tasks allotted them; but others were decidedly hostile to all attempts at negro improvement, and desired no incentive to slave labour but that which was supplied by the cart whip, and similar instruments of torture. The spiritual interests of the negro were either the subjects of profane ridicule, or were absolutely forgotten. The black man, though redeemed by the blood of the Son of God, was regarded merely as a machine for the manufacture of sugar. Unhappily the enemies of missions formed the majority, and were perpetually inventing tales of insurrection, in which they were careful to implicate the missionaries; and some of the local legislatures embarrassed these ministers of Christ by persecuting enactments. The object of the missionaries was purely spiritual. They taught the negroes Christianity, with a reference to the salvation of their souls, and had no ulterior design whatever. They saw the people perishing in ignorance and sin; and felt themselves bound to obey the command of the Saviour, who has directed that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." When the slaves were impressed under the ministry of the word, the missionaries united them together in Christian societies, that they might watch over one another's religious and moral conduct. The slaves were accustomed to promiscuous intercourse; and the missionaries explained to them the necessity, sanctity, and permanence of the marriage tie, and joined them together in holy matrimony; at the same time inculcating upon them the duties of contentment, submission, and diligence. Though the missionaries never interfered with the civil condition of the slaves, yet it was evident to every person of discernment, who had watched the progress of events in the world, that Christianity and slavery could not finally subsist together; especially such slavery as prevailed in the West Indies. The converted negroes became intelligent, thoughtful, industrious, and faithful in every domestic relation. Christianity prepared them to discharge the duties, and enjoy the rights of civil liberty; it even taught them, "if they might be made free, to use it rather;" and as its light and influence spread among the negro population, slavery was seen in all its enormity. The men, therefore, who deprecated all alteration in the civil condition of the slave, and wished to rivet the chain upon his neck for ever, endeavoured to arrest the progress of evangelical instruction, and to perpetuate brutal ignorance, as best suited to a people who were treated like cattle, and as the only means of securing a permanent property in the negro and his hapless offspring. These adversaries of the truth professed to be friendly to negro instruction and conversion; they only wanted to get rid of the missionaries, as being dangerous to the community, and incompetent to the task which they had undertaken; well knowing, that, in the absence of the missionary, there was no man to care for the spiritual interests of the slave, or to teach him the way of life.

The advocates of ignorance and of slavery were at once numerous, bold, and determined; and in the senate, in the public papers, and in pamphlets, held up the missionaries to general scorn and reprobation. In the month of June, 1816, Mr. Barham, M. P., for Stockbridge, stated in the house of commons, that the Methodist missionaries in the West

Indies, under a mask of religion, inculcated principles of sedition, taught disobedience to masters, and encouraged among the negroes those delusive and pernicious ideas which led in one instance to open insurrection, and in others to a prevailing state of agitation and discontent. The committee applied to him through the medium of the Rev. James Wood, one of the general treasurers, requesting him to supply them with the requisite names and facts, that they might call to an account the men who had so offended; declaring that such conduct was in direct opposition to the instructions which the missionaries had received, and which they had individually pledged themselves to observe. The honourable member refused to enter into any explanation on the subject of these grave charges, except in the house of commons. At the request of the committee Mr. Butterworth brought the matter before parliament; when Lord Castlereagh, and the chancellor of the exchequer, bore honourable testimony to the exemplary conduct of the Methodist missionaries in the West India colonies, and the benefits resulting from their labours; and Mr. Barham declared that it was not his intention to cast any reflection upon the missionaries employed by that body to which it was well known Mr. Butterworth belonged. He acknowledged his inability, in fact, to discriminate between one religious sect and another; but stated that he had been informed that men who were called Methodist missionaries had been guilty of the delinquencies which he had imputed to them. The names of the offenders, and the times and places at which these missionaries had thus dishonoured their sacred office, he was not prepared to specify. Mr. Butterworth withdrew his motion at the request of Lord Castlereagh; his lordship declaring, in behalf of his majesty's government, that there lay no charge whatever against the missionaries who had been censured so harshly by name.

Mr. Barham had a zealous coadjutor in Mr. Marryat, himself also a member of the senate. This gentleman attacked the character and ministrations of the Methodist missionaries in various pamphlets, in which he was assisted by anonymous writers in different periodical journals; and so loud was the clamour, that Mr. Watson was induced to publish "A Defence of the Wesleyan Methodist Missions in the West Indies: including a Refutation of the Charges in Mr. Marryat's 'Thoughts on the Abolition of the Slave Trade,' &c, and other Publications; with Facts and Anecdotes illustrative of the Moral State of the Slaves, and of the Operation of Missions." The publication of this pamphlet was a seasonable antidote to the unfounded calumnies against missionaries in the West Indies, which were then urged with such frequency and vehemence, that they had already begun to make an injurious impression upon the public mind; and it afforded to the friends and supporters of the missions to the negroes a ground of honest triumph and congratulation. Never was the defence of a righteous cause more complete. The author's piety, his eloquence, his wit, his philanthropy, his statesman-like views, and his powers of argumentation, are all brought with admirable effect to bear upon his subject.

There were several Wesleyan ministers stationed in different parts of Great Britain, who had formerly been missionaries to the negroes; and the committee with whom Mr. Watson was connected addressed a circular letter to each of these excellent men, and to some of their

brethren in the West Indies, proposing various questions respecting the religious and moral condition of the slaves before they were brought under missionary instruction and influence; the effect of Christianity upon their spirit and habits; the manner in which the missionaries had been treated in the different islands; and other subjects connected with the mission; and the assumptions and fallacious reasonings of Mr. Marryat were confronted by the separate and independent testimony of the Rev. Messrs. William Warrener, Richard Pattison, John Brownell, Joseph Taylor, William Gilgrass, Myles C. Dixon, William Fish, Daniel Campbell, Isaac Bradnack, and John Willis.

As a historical record this pamphlet will maintain a permanent value. Some years hence, when every vestige of slavery shall have disappeared in the British West India colonies, when people of every colour dwelling in those beautiful islands shall live under the protection of equal laws, and the negro shall rival the white man in intelligence, property, and every thing that can elevate and adorn human nature, this pamphlet will be referred to as supplying a specimen of the heartless calumnies heaped upon the benevolent and self-denying missionaries, who were, under the blessing of Providence, the true authors of so happy a change. For it is to the operation of missions, unquestionably, that the abolition of slavery is to be attributed; though nothing could be more remote from the views of the missionaries when they first entered upon their work. The missions have brought to light the real state of the slave; and the murderous violence with which some of the planters have assailed the men who were engaged in his instruction ultimately roused the people of England to petition parliament for the overthrow of the system.

Having shown by irrefragable evidence, that before the missionaries commenced their labours in the West Indies the negroes in general had scarcely the slightest conception of religion in any form; that they had no Sabbath; were almost entire strangers to the marriage relation; that the clergy in general, residing in the West Indies, did not consider the negroes as any part of their charge; and that by means of missionary labour many thousands of these degraded people had been raised to a character of purity, loyalty, and happiness, enduring the evils of slavery "with a glad heart and free," enjoying the blessings of Christianity both in life and in death; Mr. Watson concludes his publication in the following emphatic and impressive manner:—"If the object of this party, so zealous in the cause they have espoused as to put every periodical work and newspaper they can influence into requisition, to convey their charges and insinuations against those who are employed in instructing and Christianizing the slave population of the colonies, be also to influence the British parliament in favour of some restrictive measure they may intend to propose, this attempt is still bolder than the incitement of the colonists, and implies a very indecent reflection upon a legislature which of late has been more than usually active in directing its attention to the improvement of the education and morals of the lower classes; and which is not more distinguished for the talents of its members, than for a general and established character of religious liberality. To suppose it even possible for the British parliament to adopt the jealous feelings, the intolerance and the total disregard for the religious interests of the

negro slaves, by which they have distinguished themselves, can only be accounted for by the proneness of men to measure others by their own standard. The presumption, however, cannot be so high, nor the real character of parliament so little known, as to embolden them to make this attempt directly. We shall doubtless hear again, as formerly, of their anxiety for the instruction of the negroes, their wish that a better provision may be made for that purpose by the Church of England; and then, (which is the key to the whole,) of the necessity of discountenancing the efforts of all other missionary societies. But with the evidence which has already been presented of the real state of the negroes, the acknowledged impracticability of providing adequate religious instruction for them by other means than are now in operation, the good which has already been effected, the important moral influence which is in present activity, and the extensive benefits, both civil and moral, which are every year developing themselves, the cause of the African may be left without anxiety in the hands of the British parliament, and to the opinion of the British public, notwithstanding the active means of misrepresentation, and the calumnies which have been employed to bring into discredit missions of the first order in point of civil importance, and of the greatest magnitude in respect of success. But there are deeper interests involved in them, and which cannot appeal to the heart in vain while our Christianity is any thing more than a name, and our professed respect for religion better than a hollow pretence. Are they considerations of no weight with the public, in an age of generous philanthropy, and enlightened zeal for the progress of the truth of God, that for so many years thousands of neglected slaves have been sought out and instructed by missionaries of different denominations, when none beside cared for them? that thousands in that period have passed into a happy immortality, having been previously prepared for it by the hallowing influence of religion? that a system of instruction has been commenced, which, if unchecked in its operation, will prepare an ignorant and abject class of men to read with advantage those Holy Scriptures which it is now the noble ambition of so large and respectable a class of society at home to furnish to every nation under heaven; and which will extend all those blessings through the West Indies, which are so justly considered as attached to the preaching of the Gospel, and to the possession of the sacred oracles? Is it a powerless appeal made to humane and religious feeling, that crimes have been diminished among the slaves wherever the influence of the Gospel has been permitted freely to exert itself? that punishments have been proportionally mitigated? that the moral standard, however low it may yet be, has been greatly raised in many of the islands? that so many cheering spectacles of happy and orderly negro families are exhibited? that the negro hut resounds with the praises of Christ; and the infant children of Ethiopia, under the care of their converted mothers, are taught to stretch out their hands unto God? Such have been the effects, more or less strikingly displayed, wherever the missionaries have laboured. 'The wilderness and the solitary place have been glad for them.' And is this fair prospect,—at once the effect of moral cultivation, and the demonstration of its efficiency,—to be broken in upon and trampled down at the call of men by whose exertions a ray of light was never

conveyed into the mind of a slave, nor any of his vices corrected; who can survey without a sigh his mind in ruins, the habitation of those prowling passions which are the objects of their dread, and the instruments of his misery; content only if he continues to crouch under the whip, and to yield his appointed quantum of labour; and indignant, not at their own neglect, and his vices, but at the men who have expended health and life in *his* cause and *theirs?* A work of so much mercy cannot be placed under the protection of the public sentiment of the people of this country in vain; nor will the parliament of Great Britain allow undertakings so dear to humanity and piety to be obstructed by calumny and clamour. The appeal which, when the bodily wrongs only of the sons of Africa were in question, roused every feeling of humane interest in the parliament and people of Great Britain, will not be less powerful when connected with the immortal interests of the mind, and the solemnities of eternity: "AM I NOT A MAN, AND A BROTHER?"

Mr. Watson's correspondence with the missionaries in the West Indies, and frequent intercourse with the excellent men who had returned from that field of labour, rendered him perfectly familiar with the state of society in those colonies, and produced in his mind a deep conviction of the essential cruelty and wickedness of negro slavery; and this conviction at length led him to co-operate, in a manner the most cordial and efficient, with the Christian philanthropists who so long and honourably laboured to effect the extinction of that enormous evil. Nor was this at all surprising. He must have had a heart of adamant who was not moved to pity and indignation by the recital of negro wrongs and sufferings; and especially when he saw the determined and persevering attempts which were made to deny to the oppressed the only consolation applicable to their case,—the consolation of religion. In his "Defence of the Missions" Mr. Watson partly draws aside the veil, and exhibits the miseries of slavery. The following fact, supplied by Mr. Gilgrass, speaks volumes on this subject:—"A master of slaves, who lived near us in Kingston, Jamaica, exercised his barbarities on a Sabbath morning, while we were worshipping God in the chapel; and the cries of the female sufferers have frequently interrupted us in our devotions. But there was no redress for them or for us. This man wanted money; and one of the female slaves having two fine children, he sold one of them, and the child was torn from her maternal affection. In the agony of her feelings she made a hideous howling; and for that crime was flogged. Soon after he sold her other child. This 'turned her heart within her,' and impelled her into a kind of madness. She howled night and day in the yard, tore her hair, ran up and down the streets and the parade, rending the heavens with her cries, and literally watering the earth with her tears. Her constant cry was, '*Da wicked massa Jew, he sell me children. Will no Buckra massa pity nega? What me do? Me no have one child.*' As she stood before my window, she said, '*My massa,*' (lifting up her hands toward heaven,) '*do me massa minister, pity me! Me heart do so,*' (shaking herself violently,) '*me heart do so, because me have no child. Me go a massa house, in massa yard, and in me hut, and me no see em!*' and then her cry went up to God. I durst not be seen looking at her."

Mr. Watson's pamphlet was extensively read by members of parliament, and other public men. Mr. Wilberforce expressed his approbation of it in strong terms. It silenced Mr. Marryat; and from the time of its publication the conduct of that gentleman toward the Methodist members of the house of commons was courteous and respectful.—The work appeared in the spring of 1817, and, in the course of the following summer, procured for the author many votes of thanks from missionary meetings in different parts of the country.

This publication had a far more important bearing than the author and his friends anticipated. Up to that period the missionaries, intent only upon promoting the spiritual interests of the negroes, had done little to show the people of England the real character of West Indian slavery. They had rather concealed the miseries of the slave, than declared his true condition; for they were afraid of disobliging the planters, and of being denied all access to the objects of their charge. The attacks upon the missionaries, however, extorted from them disclosures concerning the brutal ignorance of the negro, and the state of oppression under which he groaned; and these disclosures were not without their effect upon the religious part of the community. Mr. Watson's pamphlet, which was wrung from him by the violence of the West Indian body, in a great degree prepared the public mind for that movement by which West Indian slavery has been abolished.—Thus does the Almighty, in the wise and beneficent arrangements of his Providence, cause even "the wrath of man to praise him."

On Wednesday, May 7th, he was requested to take a part in the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which was held in Freemason's hall. As a zealous friend of missions and of mankind, the interests of this society lay near his heart, and its successes afforded him the liveliest gratification. At that time the circulation of the Holy Scriptures in the immense Russian empire was encouraged by the emperor; and the results were likely to be beneficial in the highest degree. Upon these subjects he expatiated with a glow of grateful feeling, and with his usual felicity of expression. Unhappily, the sanction then given to the Bible society in Russia was subsequently withdrawn; and that career of improvement which had been auspiciously begun was checked by the government, and the regeneration of its semi-barbarous subjects deferred to a more remote period. Mr. Watson's anticipations, therefore, have not yet been realized. He spoke to the following effect:—

My Lord,—The report and the addresses which we have heard this day have turned our attention to the Russian empire; and delightful are the views which are there presented to us. We cannot listen to such statements, without anticipating from the circulation of the Scriptures in the Greek Church, the revival of religion there in all its purity; and whoever considers the geographical position of the Russian empire, its rising greatness, its political influence, and the character of its sovereign, must contemplate such a revival of pure religion as the certain harbinger of the moral renovation of the world. To merely pagan countries we send both Bibles and missionaries; but where Christianity exists, though in decay, the Bible may be sufficient. The circulation of the Scriptures alone may raise and restore the Greek Church.

The frame of the temple still stands, and the Bible will rekindle the fire upon its altars. An order of Christian ministers exists, though many of them are comparatively dead; but, like the witnesses in the Apocalypse, when the Spirit of truth shall enter into them, "they shall stand upon their feet and prophesy."

The circulation of the Scriptures in the Latin Church produced our own glorious reformation, and gave us Protestantism, with all its blessings. And we may look forward to the same results in the Greek Church, with this interesting difference, that the opposition made to the circulation of the Scriptures in the Latin Church produced an angry schism; but, encouraged as Bible societies are in the Greek Church, the free diffusion of Divine truth will re-animate the body, and yet, probably, preserve its unity. This, my lord, is a cheering consideration. Our reformation dawned upon us with lurid glare; all our Protestant Churches had their birth amidst the convulsions of political elements, and their cradle was rocked by storms: but in Russia we have the prospect of change without convulsion, of the good without the evil; its reformation approaches like a soft and beauteous sun rise, shedding rays equally welcome on the cottages of Siberia, and the palaces of the northern Cesar. What is doing in Russia, in comparison of the wants and population of that empire, is chiefly in preparation; yet such notes of preparation fall delightfully on our ears: they are, like the first faint notes of the birds, wakened even by twilight into songs, preludes to the full harmony of nature, and the perfect light of day. One circumstance in the operation of the Bible society has appeared to me equally singular and encouraging,—the eager desire of the people in all places to possess those Scriptures which it is the object of the society to furnish. Has, then, the carnal mind ceased to be at enmity with God? Have vice and ignorance laid aside their hostility to truth? We believe a time will arrive, when those reproving words of the evangelist will lose their application, "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not;" a time when the darkness shall comprehend the light, and eagerly lay hold upon it.—Have we, then, the encouragement arising from the consideration, that we are approaching that period? I think we have. When the light of the Gospel faded away from the minds of men in former ages, there was no such feeling as that to which I have referred; none sighed at the approaches of night; none laid hold on truth, as Jacob on the angel, saying, "I will not let thee go." The shadows of the evening were welcomed, and the angel was repulsed. I have no other way of accounting for this change, than by referring it to the special influence of God; and this is one of the noblest proofs that the work of the Bible society is taken up into the plans of Providence: God is not only with us, but there is a sense in which he goes before us. Wherever this society directs its operations, his Spirit appears to precede it; a holy influence is breathed upon the world, preparing it to receive those blessings which the sacred word alone can communicate. This is a pledge of ultimate and universal success: it is the quickening freshness which goes before the morning; the rising breeze, which indicates the descending and universal shower.

I will add but another remark; and I make it because it has been made before, and because it derives its interest from being made often,

Our Christian union still continues; we are still one in this glorious work; the dew of Hermon has not to us lost its refreshing quality; the ointment poured on the head of Aaron still retains all its fragrance.—I follow with pleasure the respectable divine who has just addressed you. He is an American, with a truly British heart; and he has furnished me with an American allusion, with reference to the principles of this society, which embraces Christianity of all names and all countries. We have buried the hatchet of strife; and may the moisture which nourishes the root of that tree under which we have laid it daily eat more deeply into its edge, and more completely destroy its temper. I know of but one malediction in the breast of charity; and that is reserved for the man who shall dig the hatchet from the earth, and again give sharpness to its edge.

The American divine, to whom he here refers, was the celebrated Dr. Mason, the secretary of the American Bible Society.

While Mr. Watson stood forth as the able and unflinching advocate of the missions to the negroes, and mingled his thanksgivings and joyous anticipations with the other members of the Bible society, he was attentive to the more private duties of his secretaryship, and to all his pastoral engagements; and at the same time was ready, as much as lay in his power, to assist at the anniversaries of missionary societies, especially in the northern part of the kingdom, where he had formerly laboured so usefully, and had many affectionate friends. It is indeed surprising that, with a delicate and sickly frame, he should have been able to go through so much labour both of body and mind. But he was diligent in the improvement of his time; his heart was in his work; he was engaged in a service upon which he saw that the blessing of God evidently rested; his spirit was cheerful and sanguine; and he possessed a facility in writing for the press, of which few persons who were not intimately acquainted with him could have an adequate conception. He had little time for study; but strength proportioned to his day was given to him; and his public ministry was exercised through his extensive circuit with a freshness and a power which excited general admiration. His "bow" did indeed "abide in strength;" and his usefulness was great in every department of his work. He attended the conference at Sheffield in July and August, 1817; and there he received from his brethren every mark of confidence, affection, and esteem.—The following resolution was unanimously adopted by the conference, and published in their minutes:—

"That the warmest thanks of this body are eminently due to Mr. Watson, for his able and triumphant 'Defence of the Wesleyan Methodist Missions in the West Indies,' published during the past year, at the request of the missionary committee."

At this conference it was found that the contributions toward the support of the Methodist missions were rapidly on the increase; so that the call of Providence to enlarge the sphere of their foreign operations was loud and distinct; and the cheerfulness with which those contributions were presented in all parts of the kingdom was such as to warrant the expectation of a permanent increase in their funds. While several additional missionaries, therefore, were accepted, and appointed to labour in various parts of the heathen world, the conference resolved,

"That suitable premises for a Methodist missionary house and office shall be immediately procured, in some central situation in London, affording sufficient accommodation for the orderly transaction of all our missionary business, and for a depôt of proper articles which are wanted in the outfit of missionaries." It was also felt that the plan upon which the Methodist missions were conducted was somewhat anomalous. A missionary society was formed in almost every district in the connection; but there was no general society, which could hold its annual meeting, and to which the proceedings of the executive committee could be regularly reported. The conference, therefore, directed the committee to arrange a plan for the formation of a "General Wesleyan Missionary Society," which should hold its anniversary in London about the month of May, and to which all the district societies should be considered auxiliaries. The plan thus formed was to be laid before the conference of 1818 for its approval.

Mr. Watson was returned a second year to the London east circuit; and the Rev. Messrs. Joseph Entwisle, John Reynolds, sen., John Riles, and George Marsden, were his colleagues. He was also reappointed to the office of missionary secretary, in connection with his friend Mr. Marsden.

On his return from the conference he entered upon his work with renewed ardour. He felt that he had the confidence of his brethren; he was esteemed and beloved by the congregations to whom he ministered; the missions were in a state of growing prosperity; and at no period of his life did he render more important and valuable services to the cause of Christianity, and especially to the Methodist body, than during the present year. Not long after his return from the conference he was called to preach at the opening of the new chapel in Queen-street, near Lincoln's Inn Fields. Mr. Benson preached in the morning, Mr. Newton in the afternoon, and Mr. Watson in the evening. The venerable man who took the lead in these services expressed in very strong terms his admiration of the sermons which were delivered by Messrs. Newton and Watson. The occasion was one of superior interest; the chapel being the largest that the Methodists had erected in London since the year 1777, when that in the City-Road was built; and it was more highly ornamented than any other place of worship then occupied by them in the metropolis. To these circumstances Mr. Watson alludes in the following letter, addressed

To W. C. Ellis, Esq., Surgeon, Hull.

London, Oct. 1st, 1817.

My Dear Sir,—I am sorry that the inquiries I have made among the few merchants with whom I have any acquaintance have presented nothing hopeful; and I should have been very happy to be successful in the affair. But my connections of this or indeed of any kind, in London, are very limited.

London still presents to my mind and feelings a contrast to the country; not at all in its favour. We may, and I hope do, live for others here, but certainly not for ourselves; if the intercourse of friends, the feeling of acquaintance, and the excitement of conversation, be personal advantages. However, it is the imperfection of this state to

enjoy good only by occasional contrast; and the follower of Christ is "in all things, and every where to be instructed."

There appears to have been hope in the death of ——; yet, ah! who would be content to be saved "by the skin of his teeth?" It illustrates Divine mercy, but is far below either a generous or a pious wish. It fell below the always lofty conceptions of St. Peter, who speaks of an "entrance being ministered to us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Do you hesitate as to my opinion of St. Paul, as the greatest man that ever trod the theatre of this earth? Think of every character of moral greatness, and ask whether one be wanting in him. Recollect the degree in which he possessed them; and mark how many he had which they have not who have so often been called great. Here is a subject for discussion by the fireside for you and Mrs. Ellis, in which I should be most happy to join.

I am glad to hear that Hull feels the general impulse given to our national circulation. The patient revives without the aid either of the empirical skill of Major Cartwright, or the drugging of universal suffrage. With all this we have, it is true, rumours of great sickness in different places; but that is no drawback in the consideration of the *profession Esculapean.*

I have not heard a word from Methodistical Hull since the conference. Will you give me the news? Be assured I shall never murmur at the postage, though the letter should be double. It will revive feelings not to be weighed against the arithmetic of the post office.

I have no official news, except that we are sending off about eighteen missionaries; and that we opened the new Queen-street chapel on Thursday last. You cannot see it till you get within; but then it throws even the chapel in Waltham-street into the shade. We are generally doing well in this circuit. Both societies and congregations are on the increase.

Please present my affectionate remembrance to Mrs. Ellis, and to your son. Mrs. Watson unites with me in love to them, and to Mr. and Mrs. Garbutt, and family, and to all our old friends, who are not to be forgotten by us while we remember any thing.

The missionary report for the year 1817, which it fell to the lot of Mr. Watson to prepare for publication, and which appeared about the end of the year, was full of important intelligence. The contributions amounted to the noble sum of £17,227. 8*s.* 9½*d.*; and a large addition was made to the number of missionaries. A few extracts from this interesting document will contain facts which ought not to be forgotten, and will serve to show the spirit and manner of the writer:—

"One of the first labours which devolved upon the committee was the sending out to their respective appointments the additional missionaries appointed by the conference of 1816; and to this they advert with pleasure and gratitude. The prayers of the pious, who, affected by the dark and vicious condition of the world, had earnestly entreated the Lord of the harvest to send forth more labourers, were in this respect answered.

"The accession of so great a number of qualified men enabled the

committee to open several important new stations, and to reinforce the missions in other places, where the provision was inadequate to the exigence of the case, and where the calls of the people, desiring to 'hear words by which they might be saved,' were the most pressing. Six additional missionaries were sent to Newfoundland; three to Canada; three to Nova-Scotia; one to the Bahamas; one to Jamaica; four to Antigua, and other British islands in the West Indies; two to St. Domingo; one to Sierra-Leone; and three to Ceylon; making, in the whole, twenty-four missionaries appointed and sent out last year.

"Of the persons who thus, at the call of the Church, have devoted themselves to the work of God in foreign parts, the committee state, with great satisfaction, that they appeared eminently qualified for the important work which was confided to them; and that their talents, piety, prudence, and zeal, give encouraging promise of extensive usefulness. Several of them had laboured in the work at home with great acceptance; and the rest were strongly recommended by the quarterly and district meetings. In their examinations by the committee, their religious experience, their views of Christian doctrine and discipline, and the motives which led them to engage in the ministry, and particularly to prefer the missionary field of labour, were in the highest sense satisfactory. They have been 'separated to the Gospel of God,' as 'men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost;' and the committee commend them, with their fellow missionaries, to the special prayers of all who love the name and cause of our Lord Jesus Christ."

After describing in detail the state of the various missions under the direction of the conference, the report concludes in the following beautiful and impressive strain:—"The committee cannot close this brief view of the present state of the missions confided to their management, without congratulating the friends who have so liberally subscribed to their support upon their prosperity; and calling upon them to unite in acknowledging in their preservation, success, and extending influence, the hand of Him whose counsels alone can efficaciously direct such a work, and whose blessing alone can make it prosper. In every station to which the committee have adverted, indications of advancement and progress present themselves; and equally demand a tribute of devout gratitude for the past, and afford the cheering stimulus of hope for the future. In the West Indies, our oldest mission—a mission equally interesting to humanity and to piety—is with every year becoming more commensurate to the wants of the black and coloured population; the wilds of our American colonies are more deeply penetrated, and the worship of God established where his name and Sabbath had been too generally forgotten; the outcasts of New South Wales hear the voice of praise around their dwellings; Methodist missionaries have planted themselves by the side of those excellent men who are giving Christianity, with all its blessings, to the pagans of Southern and Western Africa, not as rivals of their work, but as helpers of their joy; and the elements of a system of Christian instruction, and an efficacious ministry, are prepared for the fallen Christians and atheistical pagans of Ceylon, which are gradually coming into more efficient combination, and more energetic results. To so extensive a missionary system the committee are confident the friends of religion will not become indifferent. Hitherto they have

aided it by their prayers, by their approbation and support; and they will scarcely need to be reminded, that the enlarged exertions which have been made under the influence of that spirit of missionary zeal, which they have both shared with and reflected back upon each other with increased power, will demand the persevering application of their counsel, influence, and effort. Increased vigour has been infused into the old-established missions; but as to many of the stations, the work is in its infancy. The verdure only begins to gladden the surrounding desert with incipient life, and the light to break through the darkness. To them the work, begun under auspices so encouraging, must be, from time to time, solemnly committed; until the full fruit of their sacrifices, prayers, and efforts shall be reaped in the permanent and triumphant establishment of the kingdom of Christ in regions where his name is not known, or known only to be degraded by the wretched fiction of a nominal Christianity.

"The committee noticed in the last report the enlarged concern for the state of the heathen, and the renewed ardour for the enlargement of the kingdom of Messiah, which had been produced in different parts of the nation, by the operation of missionary societies, and the public services and proceedings connected with their formation or anniversaries; and the experience of another year has afforded additional proofs of the efficient operation of these institutions, in not only increasing the funds, by which the work has been greatly extended, but also in producing or deepening those principles of religious charity and pious action which so justly accord with the designation of the Christian as 'the light of the world,' and afford the best pledge of steady and persevering exertion in the loftiest and best of causes. Under the example of those places which were 'forward in this work,' new missionary societies have been commenced in several important towns and districts; and local associations and branch societies have been extended into the neighbourhood of those places where they had been previously formed; and whose exertions, so far from having abated, appear to receive new impulse from every statement with which they are furnished of the pressing calls of the heathen, and the increasing demands upon the missionary fund.

"In addition to the missionary societies at home the committee have the pleasure to report, that this plan of raising supplies for the work has been adopted in some of the mission stations abroad, and with the promise of considerable success. A society, entitled, 'The Bahama Methodist Missionary Society,' was formed in New-Providence in the course of last spring; which was followed by 'The Methodist Missionary Society for the District of Nova-Scotia,' including New-Brunswick, and Prince Edward's Island, which was formed at Halifax, June 3d. A similar society has also been formed at Demerara; the subscriptions to which are expected to amount, at the end of the year, to £100 sterling. The committee have recommended the attempt in other foreign stations, and doubt not of its success. The subscriptions of the societies already formed will appear in the next report, and will exhibit a pleasing proof that they who have been so greatly indebted to Christian benevolence are willing to exercise it toward others; and that the remembrance of their own destitute condition has led them to pity those who are yet 'without God and without hope;'

or, as the sentiment was affectingly expressed by a female slave, when bringing her contribution to the Demerara Missionary Society, 'We ought, of all persons, to help our poor fellow creatures. Once we had not the Gospel; but the people of England have sent it to us; and we ought to help in sending it all over the world.'

"The committee having made these statements, now beg leave, with an earnestness for which the importance and pressing nature of the cause of missions will be a sufficient apology, to urge upon the society and its friends the necessity not only of constancy, but of increased activity, in a work so eminently and immediately 'the work of the Lord.' They acknowledge, with joy and gratitude, the sums above stated, as highly creditable to the pious zeal and benevolence of so many district societies, and to the activity of their committees, their secretaries, and collectors. They acknowledge, with the liveliest feelings, the subscriptions and donations of many persons of other religious denominations, whose love to the common cause of Christianity is the only motive which could influence their co-operation and assistance. They wish to pay a just tribute to the unwearied exertions of those ladies who, in various places, have successfully pleaded the cause of the heathen, and largely aided the mission fund; and they hail with joy the formation of several juvenile societies, as their coadjutors in the work of Christ; and see, in the spirit with which the missionary cause has animated them, an encouraging pledge of the permanency of those plans which have been devised for providing those resources without which missionaries to the heathen cannot be sent. The missionary spirit thus excited, bound up with early associations, and connected with the ardent feelings of youth, will give its character to the man, and animate the efforts of future life in the cause of God. But with all these causes of gratulation, the committee conceive that there are places in the connection where the plans of the society might be carried into farther operation, and the subscriptions greatly enlarged; and in such places, and on persons residing in them, by whose influence and activity only the measure can be promoted, the committee would commend the subject to serious attention. Every consideration that can excite a mind which loves Christ, which burns with

> 'A jealous, just concern
> For his immortal praise,'

is furnished both by the state of the world, by the state of missions in general, and the Methodist missions in particular, to induce those who have actively engaged in the cause already, to persevere, and fully to win over to their help those whose aid has hitherto been but partial and occasional. The prosperous or hopeful state of almost every mission which has been attempted,—the abundant opportunities of extending the work in various directions,—the premature deaths of missionaries, martyrs in the cause of benevolence and piety,—the new stations in the West India Islands, which cannot be filled up and maintained without enlarged supplies,—the important call to minister to the wants of the four millions of pagans in the island of Madagascar,—the necessity of sending another missionary to cheer the solitude and aid the labours of Mr. Barnabas Shaw, now alone among the savages of South Africa,—and, finally, the important mis-

sion in Ceylon, where we are specially called to re-erect the temples of Christ, now in ruins through the neglect of Christians,—to arrest the progress of paganism and Mohammedanism, now almost triumphant over the feeble remains of Christianity,—to re-assert the honours and victories of the cross, and convey the knowledge of God and salvation through an island, the essential principle of whose religion is to deny God, and the almost universal practice to worship devils: these are the considerations which the committee wish to leave on the minds of the public; and to lay this great cause before them, and before that Saviour whose glory it aims to make known, and to the enlargement of whose kingdom it is its office to administer. 'Blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen!'"

In the month of February, 1818, Mr. Watson preached at the opening of the new chapel in Oxford, a city which he always delighted to visit. The ancient and venerable appearance of its public buildings, sacred to learning, and the personal examples of virtue and profound scholarship connected with them in his recollections, all tended to awaken in his heart the most pleasurable emotions. Here many of those master spirits were disciplined, by whose writings his own studies had been directed, and his mind trained to wisdom and piety. He used even to admire the dresses of that learned body, and took a lively interest in all the particulars of college life. No man was better qualified than he to estimate the benefits of sound learning, particularly in connection with theology; and no man was ever more sincerely attached to the institutions of the country, especially those of them which bear upon its literature, religion, science, and legislation.

That great revival of religion which has taken place in modern times, and which has been denominated Methodism, originated in Oxford. Here the persons composing what was called the Godly Club used to meet together for pious conversation, to visit the sick and the prisoners; and here the two Wesleys delivered their powerful and awakening sermons, in an age of lukewarmness and formality, regardless of the jibes of profane witlings, and of the contempt of grave men. After struggling with great difficulties for many years, the Wesleyan Methodists in Oxford succeeded in the erection of a chapel, remarkable for its neatness, and in a convenient situation. It was the third that they had occupied; and was opened on Thursday, Feb. 9th, when Dr. Adam Clarke preached in the morning, Mr. Watson in the afternoon, and Mr. Bunting in the evening. On the following Sunday, Mr. Benson preached in the morning and evening, and Mr. Jenkins in the afternoon. The collections made at the different services amounted to upward of £200. The undergraduates of the university were duly warned, in their several colleges, not to attend any of these services; and while Mr. Bunting was preaching in the evening, the proctor, whose office it is to find out delinquents, and bring them to justice, apprehensive that some member of that learned body might have strayed into this unhallowed place, walked with an air of authority into the chapel; took his stand in one of the aisles; deliberately surveyed the congregation; and not observing any person there who was under his jurisdiction, retired, and left the preacher to finish his discourse, to the edification of his hearers.

An event occurred in connection with the opening of this chapel of a somewhat amusing kind; and as it is calculated to teach an important practical lesson to those who are often thrown into the company of strangers, it may be worth while to relate it. When Dr. Clarke was on his way to Oxford, attended by two or three friends, who were accompanying him, they met with a lady in the road, who called to the coachman, and inquired if he could take her to Oxford. As there was a vacant place in the coach, she took possession of it, and thus joined the doctor and his party. Not suspecting who they were, she informed them that she was on her way to Oxford, to attend the religious services connected with the opening of a Methodist chapel in that city; that she was not a Methodist herself; but had heard a favourable account of the ministers who were to officiate, and had determined to hear and judge for herself, respecting a people whose tenets and practices excited so much attention in the world. The company suffered the lady to remain in ignorance as to who her fellow travellers were; and she, with all possible frankness, related to them what she had heard concerning the character and talents of the men whose ministry she was going to attend; stating particularly, that she understood Dr. Clarke to be a very learned man, but a plain preacher. She perceived the company to be somewhat amused by her remarks; and, supposing that they were inclined to treat Methodist preaching with levity, pressed them to attend the services which were the object of her journey; at the same time expressing a hope that even they might hear something at the chapel which at least would do them no harm. On the following morning, while sitting in the chapel, waiting for the commencement of the service, she recognized the doctor's friends in an adjoining pew; and, giving them a nod and a smile, was pleased to think that they had accepted her invitation. At length the doctor came out of the vestry, and ascended the pulpit;—the very man whose character she had unknowingly described and criticised in his presence on the preceding day! Her feelings of surprise and mortification may be more easily conceived than expressed; and when the service was ended, she complained bitterly to the doctor and his friends, for having suffered her to place herself in so awkward a position. The doctor spoke to her with his characteristic benevolence and generosity, so as to remove from her mind every uneasy feeling; and before he left Oxford, he addressed a letter to her, giving her information on some doctrinal topics, concerning which she was making anxious inquiries. In the meanwhile the case transpired, and was whispered in different directions; and as the tale was new, and seemed too good to be suppressed, every one that knew it was prompt in communicating it to his neighbour. Mr. Watson was made acquainted with the particulars, and in the course of the day related the whole to a large party, unconscious that the lady was in the room, and was writhing under his playful description of her unfortunate adventure; thus, in fact, putting himself in the very situation which excited his amusement.

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Watson's Pamphlet on the Eternal Sonship of Christ—Extracts on the Use of Reason in Religion—Mr. Robert Hall's Opinion of Mr. Watson's Pamphlet—Unkind Reply to it—Consequences of Dr. Clarke's Theory—Resolution of Conference in regard to the Doctrine of the Eternal Sonship of Christ—Plan of the General Wesleyan Missionary Society—Arrival of two Priests of Budhoo from India—Letter to Mr. Walton—Conference of 1818—Formation of the General Chapel Fund—Mr. Watson's removal to the London West Circuit—Preaches before the Sunday School Union—Extracts from his Sermon—Attends an Ordination of Missionaries at Bristol.

Early in the year 1818 Mr. Watson published one of his most important theological works: an elaborate dissertation on the Divine and eternal Sonship of Christ, and on the use of reason in matters of revelation. As a preacher he had attained the highest rank in the public estimation; the single sermons and the missionary reports which he had published showed to great advantage his abilities in that species of composition which combines argumentation with rhetorical embellishment; and his answer to Mr. Roscoe, and Defence of the Wesleyan Missions, demonstrated that his powers in political disquisition and general controversy were of no common order: but he was yet comparatively unknown as a divine; and in what manner he could grapple with the more profound questions in theology was yet to be determined. An opportunity now offered; the occasion was momentous; and the call of duty appeared to be obvious and urgent. Dr. Adam Clarke's very elaborate Commentary on the Holy Scriptures was then in a course of publication; and was read very extensively, and with great avidity, especially in the Methodist connection, of which the author had long been a distinguished ornament. In this work the doctor strenuously contends for the true and proper Divinity of Jesus Christ; but at the same time maintains that he is the Son of God merely in regard to his human nature; and that he is so denominated because of the manner in which that nature was produced in the womb of his virgin mother. This opinion was not new; though it does not appear that Dr. Clarke had adopted it from any other writer. It was, however, at variance with the tenets of Mr. Wesley and of the Methodist body; and was clearly opposed to almost every orthodox confession of faith, and to the general sense of the Christian Church in every age. The learned commentator does not oppose the doctrine generally held, because in his judgment it contradicts the plain and obvious meaning of Holy Scripture; but because he could not reconcile it with his philosophy: and hence the argument upon which he rests his cause, and which is contained in his note on Luke i, 35, is deduced entirely from human analogies. Having enumerated, at the conclusion of his work, the leading principles which he believed and advocated, he says, "The doctrine which cannot stand the test of rational investigation cannot be true.—The doctrines or principles already enumerated have stood this test; and those which shrink from such a test are not doctrines of Divine revelation. We have gone too far when we have said, such and such doctrines should not be subjected to rational investigation, being doctrines of pure revelation. I know no such doctrine in the Bible. The doctrines of this book are doctrines of eternal reason; and they are

revealed because they are such. Human reason could not have found them out; but, when revealed, reason can both apprehend and comprehend them."

Against these principles Mr. Watson felt it his duty to raise the warning voice. He thought that, however innoxious they might be in the mind of Dr. Clarke, a man of established piety and orthodoxy, their influence upon young persons of limited reading, of speculative habits, and superficial religious experience, would be very injurious. At the same time, to oppose Dr. Clarke was painful and hazardous. The doctor was venerable for his years and learning; he was one of the fathers of the connection to which he belonged; the deference paid to his opinions in many quarters was profound; his peculiar views were somewhat extensively entertained, and any thing published in opposition to them was likely to raise a considerable clamour. Mr. Watson was by far Dr. Clarke's junior; he had once left the connection, and had but recently returned; and although he had given indications of great powers, and had rendered important services to the Wesleyan body, yet at that time his character did not stand so high in the public estimation as that of the eminent man with whom he was about to enter the lists. Under all these disadvantages, and with these discouragements before him, he committed to the press a large pamphlet entitled, "Remarks on the Eternal Sonship of Christ; and the Use of Reason in Matters of Revelation: suggested by several passages in Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament. In a Letter to a Friend."

The "friend" to whom this letter was originally addressed was the Rev. Thomas Galland, M. A., of Queen's college, Cambridge, then recently admitted into the Wesleyan itinerancy. The passages in the doctor's commentary just referred to had engaged the attention of this excellent man, who was startled by their boldness and peculiarity; and he solicited Mr. Watson's help in solving the difficulties which were presented to his mind. In answer to his inquiries, Mr. Watson says, "You request my opinion on those passages of Dr. Clarke's Commentary, in which he has rejected a doctrine received in all ages, and by every Church reputed orthodox,—the eternal filiation of the second person of the holy trinity; and also on those principles which he has laid down in support of his own views; views not new, but which have of late been almost peculiar to those who entirely reject the essential Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"I should have been very unwilling to be the first to excite a controversy on these subjects. Had the notions in question passed off, as certain peculiarities of opinion in Dr. Clarke's Commentary have done, —noticed only for the moment, and now almost forgotten,—I would not have recalled to them the attention of his readers, better employed, I hope, on the many excellent illustrations of Scripture which his work contains. But from their notorious opposition to the sentiments most commonly received among Christians, and in that religious body to which Dr. Clarke belongs, they have been the subject of much and serious discussion: they have made some converts, and have mooted subjects which have never been put into discussion in any Church without considerable mischief. This was the case before any reply was made to them. Since then a written controversy has commenced; and

my reasons for engaging in it may be briefly stated. I consider it a very serious one. I think a clearly revealed truth has been given up by Dr. Clarke; and that he has defended his opinions by arguments, and on principles, which, however innocently held by himself, as to their practical influence upon his own thinkings on religious subjects, are very capable of being turned against doctrines which he reveres in common with all orthodox Christians. I would, however, premise,

"1. That I approach the subject merely as a matter of theological inquiry. The notes objected to are before the world; they are proposed, as other writings, to the judgments of men, and lie open to remark and criticism.

"2. That I have no feeling but that of respect toward Dr. Clarke. My personal acquaintance with him is but slight; and what I know of him by his writings has impressed me with a high sense of his talents and virtues.

"3. That I have not taken up the subject under the idea that the learned annotator does not most firmly believe in the essential Divinity of Christ. Of this doctrine his notes afford ample proof; and in support of it they contain masterly and irrefragable arguments: and I am farther persuaded that at the time he wrote those passages, in which he restricts the application of the term Son of God, as it occurs in the New Testament as an appellation of Christ, to his human nature, he conscientiously believed that he was removing an objection to the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity: and,

"4. That, though I shall have occasion to remark that he has, in some instances, adopted Arian and Socinian rules of interpreting Scripture, and, as I conceive, very dangerously, I strongly protest against this being construed into an insinuation that I associate Dr. Clarke with the theologians of either class: at the same time, honesty obliges me to confess, that though the doctor's great qualities may keep him secure upon those premises which on some subjects he has assumed, yet they appear to me to have produced contradiction and inconsistency in his comments. It is seriously to be apprehended, that many of his readers will be greatly bewildered by them in their religious opinions; and that their direct tendency is to lead to errors which Dr. Clarke himself would be the first to condemn.

"These particulars being premised, I hope that it will appear to you and to others, that I enter upon the discussion with that respect for Dr. Clarke which his learning and talents demand; and that it is quite consistent with this respect, to feel that we owe, more than to any man, a deference to truth. The one is propriety; the other is imperative duty."

After these preliminary observations Mr. Watson enters upon his subject, stating, "The present inquiry respects, first, the eternal Sonship of Christ, which Dr. Clarke denies; secondly, the principles by which he has corroborated his negation of that doctrine."

In the former part of his work Mr. Watson shows that the title Son of God is applied to our Lord throughout the New Testament, not with an exclusive reference to his miraculous conception, but as the appropriate designation of a Divine person. It does not, indeed, appear that the fact of the miraculous conception was known beyond the limits of the holy family till after our Lord was raised from the dead. John the Baptist was raised by a special providence as the forerunner of our

Lord; he declared him to be the Son of God; and his powerful ministry was felt in the length and breadth of Judea; yet he left the people ignorant of this fact; for when Jesus entered upon his ministry it was the current opinion that he was "the son of Joseph." The evangelists introduce many persons who acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God; but no intimation is given that they applied to him this title with any reference to the manner in which his human nature was produced.—The title was understood by the Jews especially to imply an equality with the Father; and when they charged him with blasphemy, and clamoured for his crucifixion, because he said he was the Son of God, and that God was his Father,—thus, according to their apprehensions, "making himself equal with God,"—he gave no intimation that they were in error in affixing this meaning to the terms which he used. Having adduced many passages of Scripture, and shown their bearing upon the argument, Mr. Watson contends that, whatever may be the deductions of philosophy, the legitimate inference to be drawn from the inspired records is, that the second person of the Godhead stands in a filial relation to the first, independently of all reference to his incarnation. To use the beautiful language of the Nicene Creed, he is "the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father." As to the manner of the Son's generation, Mr. Watson wisely forbears all attempts at explanation. The Holy Scriptures are silent on the subject; and all analogies derived from created nature must for ever fail to convey adequate ideas of the mode of the Divine existence. It was sufficient for him to rest in the fact, as revealed by God himself; waiting till his arrival in the world of spirits for those farther discoveries which the Almighty, in the plenitude of his wisdom and love, may see good to make. The opposite theory, he perceived, when pushed to its consequences, must either lead to an acknowledgment of three co-ordinate Deities, or to a denial of all personal distinction in the Godhead.

Strong and decisive as is Mr. Watson's reasoning on the eternal Sonship of Christ, the second part of his pamphlet, in which he endeavours to ascertain the use of reason in matters of revelation, is still more valuable and important; as it not only detects the origin of the contrary opinion, but of nearly all the doctrinal errors that have bewildered the minds of men, and afflicted the Church of God. The principles laid down by the author are defended and illustrated with great eloquence and force of argument. They display no ordinary soundness and vigour of intellect, and cannot be too widely disseminated.

"The conclusion of these observations on the office of reason in religion," says Mr. Watson, "may be thus summed up: the office of reason is, to judge of the evidence of the record professing to be a revelation from God. When we are satisfied of the Divine authority of Scripture, our understanding is to be employed humbly, and with dependence upon God, in ascertaining its sense: and whatever doctrine is there stated, or necessarily implied by the harmony of its different parts, is to be admitted, believed, and held fast, whether it corroborate or contradict the notions which our previous or collateral reasonings have led us to adopt.

"I know that there is nothing here so dazzling as in the principles

on which I have animadverted. It is more flattering to the human mind to be accounted a judge, than to be reduced to the rank of a scholar; to be placed in a condition to summon Divine wisdom to its bar, and oblige it to give an account of the reasons of its decisions, than to receive them upon authority; but this is the safe, because the humble, path: and I greatly mistake, if it be not also the true way to high illumination in the things of God. It is to the patient, prayerful study of Divine truth, by its own light, that its harmonies, and connections, and beauties most freely reveal themselves; as the bud discloses to the solar light the graces it refuses to the hand of violence.

"I am not unaware that the learned commentator on whom I have so freely remarked will, at least partially, demur to the view I have given of the principles he has laid down in the conclusion of his valuable work. I have drawn them out to a length to which he probably did not mean them to extend. This I am anxious to believe; but my business is with what he has said, and not with what he might intend: for it is by what he has said that his opinions will influence and direct others in their religious inquiries. The principles have been taken in their true logical sense, and in the meaning of the terms in which they are expressed, as those terms are and must be understood in the conventional language of mankind. There are great errors, in my view, in the principles themselves, after every explanation which can accord with the meaning of language has been given; but there are still greater, arising out of the loose and even contradictory manner in which they are expressed. If followed out as they stand in the commentary, they would inevitably lead to the greatest errors; and if by some subtlety Dr. Clarke can himself accommodate them to correct views on religious subjects, he ought certainly to have remembered that his readers have not generally that adroitness. If he can poise himself in walking the bridge he has thrown over the gulfs of error,—a bridge narrowed to greater sharpness than that which Mohammed is said to have laid for the transit of the faithful from earth to heaven,—he would have done well to consider how many, less experienced than himself, would also venture upon it, and be probably plunged into a gulf of too hopeless a depth to admit return. This is a serious consideration, which he has too much regard for the truths he holds sacred, and too much love to the souls of men, not to be impressed with. He has authority; but that imposes the obligation of severe caution upon the writer who possesses it; and I do hope, though what I can say on the subject cannot be supposed to have great weight with him, that when he reflects upon the number of his readers, and the extent of influence which his commentary possesses; that the opinions of so many of our young people will be formed upon it, and that it is in the nature of man to overlook the good principles in such a work, and to fix chiefly on those which are exceptionable; and especially that the turn of thinking among the young men who are introduced into the ministry, in that body of which he is so distinguished an ornament, will probably be greatly determined by their constant recourse to his Biblical labours; that he will feel greatly anxious to remove from a work which will carry down his name to posterity with honour, any principle which, however innocently held by himself, can by probable construction lead to Arian and Socinian errors, and smooth the path to

'——— That deep Serbonian bog
Where armies whole have sunk.'

This remark I apply chiefly to the concluding observations on the subject of reason; a page which, if not entirely cancelled, can only be rendered harmless by being partially expunged. Surely it must be one of the noblest objects of the ambition of the author of a work of so much authority and influence, that it should not contain an injurious principle, not even a line

'Which dying he would wish to blot.'"

Having examined Dr. Clarke's analogical argument, and shown that it is irrelevant to the subject to which it is applied, inasmuch as there can be no proportion between a human being and the infinite and everlasting God; and that the first person in the adorable trinity may be a Father, without priority of being, and that Christians may still, in the sense in which the words have been commonly understood, join together in public worship, and say, "Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father;"—Mr. Watson adds, with a felicity of thought and expression almost peculiar to himself, and with a devotional feeling which every pious mind will appreciate, "But a truce to these reasonings! I willingly give them all up for a single word of the testimony of God. I affect them not. They seem to bring me too irreverently near to God. I would not 'break through and gaze;' and I feel, while I write, how just and yet how reproving are the words of the poet of paradise:—

'Dark with excessive bright his skirts appear,
Yet dazzle heaven; that brightest seraphim
Approach not; but with both wings veil their eyes.'"

The following paragraph forms the conclusion of this most important publication:—"It has been urged by some, as a reason for adopting Dr. Clarke's views on the Sonship of Christ, that they remove a difficulty from the doctrine of the trinity. This is indeed their most delusive aspect; and the more may cursory readers be influenced by the fallacy, as they feel that the Deity of Christ is an essential doctrine of Christianity. But does the difficulty from which they think themselves relieved press upon their faith, or upon their reason? If upon the former, a moral defect is to be suspected; for whoever feels it difficult to admit the testimony of God in his word, is not brought under the full moral influence of the Gospel. The question still recurs, Is the eternal Sonship of Christ a doctrine of Scripture?—If it be rejected because the Bible is silent on the subject, the proceeding is legitimate; if, because it is a difficulty, and the depositions of Scripture are to be disregarded, that the difficulty may not press, the ground is changed; and we have laid down the principle, that we will believe no difficult doctrine, though the Scriptures declare it. On such a basis no Christian system can possibly stand. It is a pyramid on its point, nodding to its fall. But if a difficulty be removed from our reason, our joy in the discovery ought not to be suffered to take its excursions of airy delight, until we first interrogate ourselves, whether the doctrine be one which can in its nature be tested by reason; whether, in this process, we have proceeded on authority. Sober theolo-

gians would also inquire, whether by freeing ourselves from one difficulty we do not entangle ourselves in many others; whether we shall not find, on the newly-adopted scheme, additional difficulty in establishing the personalities in the Godhead; whether we shall not find it, not merely more difficult, but even impossible, to make out any meaning of half the passages in the sacred volume which speak of Christ as the Son of God, except by those lax and paraphrastic interpretations which we so justly protest against in those whose heresies we condemn, and which yield a meaning much below our present faith. This would be to purchase a relief from difficulty at much too dear a price; but in itself, and separate from consequences, the relief is worth nothing. It is, to my mind, at least, a very strong argument, *a priori*, against any scheme, that it renders a doctrine of pure revelation less difficult to reason. I am inclined to say of it, as Chillingworth of novelties, 'What is new in divinity is false.' All such doctrines, as to human reason, whether they are contrary to it, or transcend it, are in their nature difficult, and difficult because they are true; and (startling as it may appear to those who pay so much homage to the efficiency of their reason) difficult in proportion as they are revealed. 'God manifest,' revealed, 'in the flesh' constitutes the 'GREAT mystery of godliness.' The pretence of relieving the difficulties of such subjects has, in all ages of the Church, smoothed the path to error. Arianism came in with this promise; Socinianism gave farther relief to rational difficulties; deism cut the knot, and spurned the fragments. 'To the law,' then, 'and to the testimony.' The outer court is yet our place; the veil of the holiest is not yet drawn aside, except to faith; and the great virtue of divines, like that of writers, is to know where to stop."

The publication of this pamphlet stamped the character of Mr. Watson as an able divine and a profound thinker. Nothing that he had ever published made so deep an impression. The work was extensively read; a second edition was called for in the course of a few weeks; and both the subjects of discussion, and the manner in which they were treated, excited general attention in the Wesleyan body. The greater part of his brethren in the ministry felt themselves deeply indebted to him for so effectual a defence of their long-established doctrines; and not a few of them presented to him their cordial thanks for his services. Some other persons, however, less candid, attributed his work to unworthy motives; and charged the author with envying the honest fame which Dr. Clarke had so justly acquired by his talents and learning, and a desire to lower his public reputation.—Whereas, nothing could be more unjust. Few men have possessed a mind more generous, and more free from the base passion which "pines and sickens at another's joy," than Mr. Watson; and the entire course of his life should have sheltered him from the odious imputation. No suspicion of this kind was ever hinted by any man who knew his character. That Mr. Watson had serious objections to those parts of the doctor's work upon which he has animadverted, is undeniable; but he speaks of the doctor and his writings in general in terms of cordial respect. Not many weeks before his death he remarked to the writer of this narrative, in one of their free and confidential interviews, that his admiration of the devotional parts of the doctor's commentary con-

tinued to increase; and that he thought them the finest compositions of the kind he had ever read. Nor was the doctor unwilling to honour Mr. Watson's abilities. Not long after the appearance of Mr. Watson's pamphlet on the Sonship of Christ, when Mr. Southey's "Life of Wesley" was published, and called for animadversion, Dr. Clarke stood up in the conference, and declared it as his opinion that Mr. Watson was the fittest man to undertake that responsible task.

In consequence of their collision of sentiment on the questions just referred to, there were persons in different parts of the kingdom, who to the end of their lives would consider Dr. Clarke and Mr. Watson as rivals of each other; and injurious comparisons were often instituted between them. But the men were so perfectly dissimilar, both in their habits and mental constitution, that the very attempt at comparison was absurd. Each of them had his "proper gift from God, one after this manner, and the other after that." Dr. Clarke was blessed with a sound and vigorous constitution, and was spared to a good old age. To a mind of no common energy, he added a resolution and a perseverance in the prosecution of his studies which no difficulties and discouragements could daunt; and perhaps the entire history of human nature does not present a more honourable example of successful self tuition. For a considerable part of his life he retired from the full duties of the ministry, and devoted his whole attention to literature, making his studies to bear especially upon the elucidation of holy Scripture. He particularly excelled in oriental scholarship, and antiquarian research, as well as in his knowledge of curious books in almost all languages. Mr. Watson, through life, was a subject of langour, pain, and disease; and was cut off in the midst of his years.—He was distinguished by the comprehensiveness of his views, an unbounded power of imagination, a sound and discriminating judgment, and a philosophic habit of thought; and his works were written in fragments of time abstracted from urgent and pressing official engagements, and under great bodily suffering. Except in regard to the criticism of the New Testament, the studies and pursuits of these eminent men had little in common. To the kind of learning for which Dr. Clarke was so renowned, Mr. Watson directed little attention. They were both great and pious men, examples of holy diligence and zeal; and the services which they have rendered to the Church will endear their names to posterity; but to set up one man for the purpose of depreciating the other, is as palpably absurd, as it is opposed to the spirit of Christianity.

As the questions discussed with such ability in Mr. Watson's pamphlet were of general interest, the work was read by persons who had no connection with the Methodists, and was generally well received by orthodox Christians of every denomination. Mr. Hall, of Leicester, perused it with great avidity; and the opinion entertained of its merits by that incomparable judge of argument and literary composition will be seen by the following letter. It was addressed to Mr. Watson by a mutual friend, after an interview with that celebrated man. At that time Mr. Watson was personally unknown to Mr. Hall:—

May 19th, 1818.

I avail myself of the first moment of leisure I have had, to communicate what I can recollect of the conversation I had with Mr. Robert Hall, on the subject of your excellent pamphlet. I wish I could convey his sentiments and remarks in his own language; but being under the necessity of taking a long journey immediately on my leaving him, I could not commit to paper what had passed till several days after. I will give you as nearly as I can what he said on the subject.

He commenced the conversation by observing how highly he had been gratified by the perusal of your work. After some general remarks on the style and execution,—which I know your modesty would not allow me to repeat,—he proceeded to observe the great importance of the subject to the general interests of Christianity; that he had been led to pay more attention to it, than perhaps he otherwise should have done, from the circumstance, that it had been warmly agitated by the ministers of his own denomination. "But then,"—I use exactly his own language,—"all our principal men, so far from giving it their sanction and support, zealously and decidedly opposed it. Andrew Fuller wrote expressly against it; and its adoption was almost entirely confined to the young men. I am very sorry that it has received such a sanction and support in your connection, where I fear its influence will be injurious. At the same time I think Mr. Watson's pamphlet admirably adapted to check its progress, and to settle the minds of those who may have been led into a train of perplexing reasoning on the point at issue."

He said that the term "Son of God," which is so frequently used in Scripture as the designation of Jesus Christ, could not, by any fair interpretation, be confined to the human nature of our Lord. On the contrary, he conceived that the Godhead of the Son of God, as such, was as clearly revealed as any truth contained in the sacred oracles; so much so, that he considered the doctrine of the Deity of Christ as reposing principally on the Divinity of the Sonship. Jesus Christ he believed to be the Son of God, not merely in reference to his incarnation, but as possessing an actual and absolute participation of the essence of the Godhead. Without the admission of this a great part of the Scriptures must absolutely mean nothing. Many passages in which Jesus Christ is spoken of as the Son of God cannot apply to his human nature only; and if they be given up, as not applying to the Deity of Christ, we must be inevitably driven either into tritheism or Sabellianism. He could conceive of no medium. Those passages of Scripture which must be given up, if the Divine and eternal Sonship were not admitted, were to his mind the most satisfactory parts of the sacred oracles on the Deity of Christ; and afforded, in his judgment, the clearest and fullest conviction on that important subject.

He esteemed the latter part of the pamphlet as both masterly and important; for he apprehended that the most serious consequences would result from making a revelation of God submit to the reason of man. He spoke in terms of high commendation concerning the entire treatise; and very cordially wished it a very extensive circulation.

In writing these particulars, I have been careful to adhere as closely as possible to Mr. Hall's own words, and have succeeded better than I

at first expected. You may rely upon the whole as containing Mr. Hall's genuine opinion; and his authority on such a subject I consider of no small value. He gave me permission to make what use I pleased of these remarks; and you are at perfect liberty to do what you please with the contents of this letter.

Dr. Clarke offered no reply to Mr. Watson's publication. He contented himself with a repetition of his former argument, taking no notice whatever of what Mr. Watson had advanced in refutation of it. One of the doctor's friends, however, published an answer to Mr. Watson's work, and in defence of the doctor's theory; but he changed the ground of the argument; insisting that the title "Son of God" was in the first instance given to our Lord because of the manner in which his human nature was produced; but, having been thus applied to him, he was often denominated the Son of God in his complex character, as God incarnate; although, in point of fact, his Divine nature was in no sense "begotten of the Father." By this means he attempted to neutralize the argument which Mr. Watson had founded upon those texts in which the term "Son" is applied to Christ when his Divine nature is unquestionably understood; many such having been adduced. This writer introduced into his work many personal reflections upon Mr. Watson, for which no occasion whatever had been given. Throughout the whole of his pamphlet Mr. Watson had never used an unkind epithet in regard to Dr. Clarke, but had treated him with perfect courtesy and respect, confining himself, like a Christian and a gentleman, to the subject at issue between them. When he read the work in which he was spoken of in a manner so coarse and offensive, he said to the writer of these memoirs, "How deeply it is to be regretted, that Christian men cannot engage in the discussion of a theological question in which they have an equal interest, without indulging themselves in insults, and attempting to wound each other's feelings!" To such a work he would offer no reply. He had written on the Sonship of Christ with no unholy or sinister design; and he knew that the "deep things of God" were revealed for a purpose very different from that of stirring up the angry passions of human nature. In a later work, however, he met the opponents of the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ upon the ground which this writer had taken, and proved it to be a mere assumption, opposed to the plain and obvious import of the oracles of God. (*Theological Institutes*, in two volumes, vol. i, p. 528, &c.)

Mr. Watson was not mistaken in anticipating considerable evil from the operation of those principles to which Dr. Clarke had unhappily given the sanction of his name; particularly that of submitting the most mysterious doctrines of revelation to the judgment and decision of human reason. The doctor had himself, in part, applied that principle to the subject of God's foreknowledge; (in his commentary upon Acts ii;) and two individuals of speculative habits, belonging to the Wesleyan body, and profound admirers of Dr. Clarke, emboldened by his example, carried that principle to a length which he would have earnestly deprecated, and so as seriously to trench upon the Divine authority of the Bible. In the prosecution of their studies, they found themselves unable to reconcile the certain foreknowledge of God with

the feedom of the human will, and the consequent contingency of many events; and therefore decided that future contingencies cannot be known even by the infinite and eternal God. They made their reason the judge of a doctrine of Scripture; and in the exercise of its high prerogatives, it set aside an attribute of Deity which he himself expressly claims. It gave the lie to the very letter of inspiration; and resolved prophecy, which is one of the main pillars of revelation, into probable conjectures! By the mercy of God the evil was arrested, and an effectual check was given to these dangerous speculations. The conference very properly resolved to admit into its body no man who denied the Divine and eternal Sonship of Christ; aware that such a denial would in a great measure disqualify him for the use of their forms of devotion; and that few men, with such an opinion, would long hold the true and proper Godhead of the Saviour. That Dr. Clarke held this vital article of the Christian faith, they were satisfied; but his age, and piety, and faithful services, continued for near half a century, gave him a claim upon their confidence and affection which no young man could possess.

Mr. Watson's pamphlet on the Sonship of Christ was accompanied by similar publications from the pens of the Rev. Messrs. Moore, Hare, and Robert Martin; and by these means, and the interference of the conference, the orthodoxy of the body was preserved. Mr. Watson went to the source of the evil, and asserted the paramount authority of the word of God; and Dr. Clarke's theory is now generally discarded in the Wesleyan body. On none of his literary productions did Mr. Watson reflect with more sincere satisfaction through the remainder of his life, than upon his pamphlet on the Sonship of Christ. Its publication was painful to his own mind, and subjected him to harsh and unmerited censures; but advancing years, and increased knowledge, only tended to strengthen his conviction that the views which he had advocated were the truth of God; and the result even surpassed his most sanguine hopes. To have been a means of preserving inviolate the theological tenets held by the connection to which he was so strongly attached, could not but inspire his mind with joyous feelings. He has modestly adverted to this subject oftener than once, especially when he was subjected to uncandid animadversion; and when laid upon his death bed, referring to this controversy, he declared that the motives by which he had been actuated were pure and upright.

Agreeably to the direction of conference, in the year 1817, the committee to whom the management of the Methodist missions was confided prepared the plan of a General Wesleyan Missionary Society. It was drawn up by Mr. Watson, with the advice of his brethren, and submitted to the conference of 1818 for approval. It has since been published in the successive reports of the institution. The most important feature of this plan is, that it calls into useful exercise the good sense, the practical knowledge, and the piety of respectable laymen, in connection with the missionary work, by making them members of the committee of management from year to year; reserving to the preachers only the examination of missionaries, and all cases of discipline, according to the usages of the body. As the principles of this General Missionary Society were laid down by the conference, in

its instructions to the committee, the approbation of that body was anticipated; and the first meeting of the "Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society" was held in the City-Road chapel, on Monday the 4th of April, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, Thomas Thompson, Esq., M. P., in the chair.

This was an occasion of unusual interest. The intelligence which had just arrived from Ceylon was exceedingly cheering, as to the progress of the mission; Sir Alexander Johnston, the chief judge of Ceylon, had just arrived from that island, accompanied by two Budhist priests, who had come to England, earnestly requesting that they might be instructed in Christianity and useful knowledge, by the same body of people who had sent the Wesleyan missionaries to India. The chapel was crowded to excess; and, to gratify the public desire, an adjourned meeting was held on the Thursday evening following. To several events connected with this meeting Mr. Watson refers in the following letter addressed

To Mr. William Walton Wakefield.

London, May 11th, 1818.

My Dear Friend,—I hear that you were somewhat grieved that I did not visit Wakefield in my way from Hull to Liverpool, on my late Yorkshire excursion. I assure you that I was much concerned that I was not able to do so, as important and indispensable private business obliged me to be in Liverpool on the Friday evening. Be assured that no alteration has taken place in my feelings of regard for you and your excellent family; and that it would have been one of my greatest pleasures to have seen you all.

I rejoice to hear that you are better in health, though still hanging in doubtful scales. But you know whom you have trusted; and that he is able to keep that which you have committed to him against that day. That he doeth all things well, is in part a matter of experience, and in part of faith. But it shall appear in the end; and in the meantime our one great business is, to live by faith in the promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." I hope you may yet be spared for the sake of others; and that the evening of your days will have many bright prospects and heavenly visitations.

We have just got over the bustle of our meetings in London. I have had hard work for the three weeks past; but it is over, and leaves nothing but thankfulness. Our meetings in London were never so good. We had large attendance, good speaking, good sermons, and, what some think as good as all the rest, a capital collection. This year, at our public services and meetings, it amounted to more than £800, with a profusion of ear rings, finger rings, silver and gold trinkets, thrown into the boxes beside.

Sir Alexander Johnston has arrived from Ceylon, with two Budhist priests, whom the committee have engaged to take under their care; and we have placed them under the instruction of Dr. Clarke. They are very interesting fellows; but not yet fully instructed in the things of God, though a spirit of inquiry brought them to this country.

My very affectionate regards to Miss Walton and Miss Ann. At conference, all being well, I hope to see you more than once.

Thank God, my health continues pretty well amidst all fatigues; and I am not weary of my work, though it is somewhat fagging.

The appearance in England of these priests of Budhu excited great interest. They had come in pursuit of religious knowledge; and Dr. Clarke, with his characteristic generosity, undertook their tuition at the request of the missionary committee. For about two years they remained with the doctor at Millbrook, a few miles from Liverpool, and were treated by him and his family with unbounded kindness. The doctor taught them the principles of true religion, and of a just philosophy, in opposition to the crude notions in which they had been educated. He was greatly pleased with their docility and intelligence; and had the gratification of witnessing their entire renunciation of heathenism, and acknowledgment of Christianity as a revelation from heaven. Having satisfied the doctor, as to the reality of their conversion, he baptized them in the name of the holy trinity, in the Brunswick chapel, Liverpool, in the presence of a large congregation, who were deeply affected on the solemn occasion, and united in earnest prayer for these interesting strangers; thus publicly declaring their belief in God and his Christ, and waiting for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

During their residence with Dr. Clarke these men were greatly caressed by friends in Liverpool, and by respectable families in the surrounding country; a natural consequence of their agreeable manners, peculiar dress, and superior shrewdness and vivacity. When the time for their departure arrived, having so long enjoyed the sweets of British hospitality, they were exceedingly reluctant to leave England, and with difficulty were induced to embark for Ceylon. They had learned, too, that Churchmanship is somewhat more honourable than Methodism; and on their return to their native land, they renounced all connection with the people by whom they had been supported and instructed in England, and attached themselves to the Church mission, and the government chaplaincy. One of them obtained the office of a subordinate teacher, and the other a situation in one of the civil establishments. They have both retained the profession of Christianity; and since their return have used their influence in opposition to the atheistical superstitions of their countrymen. The report which they gave of themselves, on their arrival in England, that they belonged to the highest order in the Budhist priesthood, and which was published in the missionary notices of the society, proved to be incorrect. They belonged to the order of fishermen, which is said to be the lowest grade. A strict adherence to truth, it is well known, is far from being a prominent feature in the Ceylonese character; and the deception in this case was only discovered by persons residing in Ceylon, who were surprised at what they read concerning these men in the publications which they received from England.

Mr. Watson attended the conference of 1818, which was held in Leeds. The plan and regulations of the General Missionary Society met with the cordial sanction of that body; and he received the unanimous thanks of his brethren for his valuable services through the year. At this conference a general fund in behalf of embarrassed chapels belonging to the Methodist connection was also instituted, to be supported by subscriptions, congregational collections, and legacies,

out of which cases of distress were to be annually relieved by a committee appointed for that purpose. Of this important fund Mr. Watson was appointed the secretary; an office which he sustained for several years. Till this period the cases of distressed chapels had been annually reported to the conference; and permission was then given to solicit relief for each case, in a specified number of circuits. By this means the preachers belonging to the circuits where the distressed chapels were situated were taken, often for a long time together, from their families and proper work, to the injury of the societies and congregations; and considerable sums of money were unavoidably expended in travelling, instead of being applied to the direct objects for which they were given. By the plan now adopted these inconveniences were effectually obviated.

At this conference Mr. Watson was removed to the London west circuit; where he had as his colleagues the Rev. Messrs. George Morley, John Riles, and George Marsden. His colleagues in the missionary secretaryship were Messrs. Bunting and Joseph Taylor. The latter of these esteemed men resided at the mission house in Hatton-Garden; and was appointed to direct his whole attention to the concerns of the missions. Such an arrangement had been rendered necessary by the increased extent of the missions; so that the secretaries could not possibly carry on the domestic and foreign correspondence, pay the requisite attention to the instruction and outfit of missionaries, and at the same time discharge with due efficiency their pastoral duties. Though partially relieved, in regard to the more onerous duties of the secretaryship, Mr. Watson's zeal in the missionary cause suffered no declension. He lent all the assistance in his power in the management of the society's affairs; and was ready, at every opportunity, to visit the auxiliary societies in different parts of the kingdom at their several anniversaries; and his speeches and sermons every where excited an unabated interest. His counsel in the formation of new missions, and his advices to the men who were labouring in difficult and discouraging stations, were of the most valuable kind. He at once enjoyed the confidence of the committee at home, and of the missionaries abroad.

Mr. Watson's residence in the London west circuit was in Margaret-street, Oxford-street, where his thoughtful habits, and penetrating mind enabled him to derive instruction from almost every surrounding object. He was assiduous in the exercise of his ministry, and the visitation of the sick; and occasionally gratified his taste, and enlarged his knowledge, by a visit to the British museum, and to those exhibitions of art with which that part of London often abounds. When he had a leisure evening, a visit to the house of commons, or of the lords, when any important question was debated, awakened his feelings of patriotism, and strengthened his confidence in the wisdom and integrity of the statesmen then conducting the affairs of the empire. Sometimes, in passing, he would spend an hour in the court of chancery, listening to the wrangling of the lawyers; and he has been heard to say, that when he was fortunate enough to hear Lord Eldon give judgment in difficult cases, the wisdom, sagacity, and patient thought, displayed by that eminent judge, have even heightened his conceptions of the human intellect.

Mr. Watson had not been long in his new situation when he was requested to preach a sermon in the Great Queen-street chapel before the members of the Sunday School Union; a service which his friend Mr. Bunting had performed twelve or thirteen years before. With this request he complied, and in accordance with the wishes of his hearers published the discourse. It is not the most splendid of his sermons; but was justly deserving of publication because of the admirable principles it contains in regard to the right training of youth.—Its title is, "Religious Instruction an Essential Part of Education. A Sermon preached in Great Queen-street Chapel, before the Teachers of the Sunday School Union, October, 1818, and published at the request of the Committee of that Institution." It quickly passed through two or three editions; and has been extensively read, not only by persons engaged in the communication of Sunday school instruction, but by parents, and those who are interested in the spiritual welfare of children and young persons. With the infidel systems of education, which assume that human nature is pure, and therefore needs no discipline but that of instruction, literary, scientific, and moral, Mr. Watson held no compromise, but waged a most determined war. The entire corruption of the human heart formed an essential article in his creed; and no education could he consider otherwise than radically defective, unless it comprehended a distinct and explicit knowledge of the nature and method of salvation through the sacrifice of Christ, as well as a competent acquaintance with Christian duty. Religious education he considered no less necessary in order to the public welfare, than to individual happiness. "We undervalue neither useful nor elegant acquirements," says he; "but if education comprise not instruction in the 'things' which, before all others, 'belong to our peace,' it is a venerable name unfitly and deceptiously applied. From a process so partial and defective no moral influence can spring; it gives no virtue to the individual; it corrects no evil in society. To this the refined nations of antiquity bear mournful but instructive testimony; and why, on a subject so solemnly important to our children and to our land, is not the voice of history regarded? She has written them refined, learned, and mighty; but she has recorded their vices, and points to their desolations. If learning could have preserved them, why has their science survived their political existence, and why does it live only in other climes? Were they without that knowledge, the attainment of which we have too often considered to be the chief or the exclusive end of education? Were they destitute of genius, and taste, and arts, and philosophy? In all they are the confessed models of modern nations; and that state has the highest fame which most successfully, though still distantly, approaches them. These they wanted not; but they wanted a true religion, and a people instructed in it. The polities they erected and adorned were built like Babylon, the capital of a still older state, with clay hardened only in the sun, and which has long become a mass of ruin undistinguished from its parent earth. They were without perpetuity, because they were without the elements of it. The fabric of their grandeur has crumbled down, because it was not combined with the imperishable principles of virtue; and their want of virtue resulted from their want of religion. Shall examples, so frequently suggested

to our recollection by the books of our boyhood, the studies of our riper years, and the very terms and allusions of our language, admonish us in vain? Yet, if reflection fail to teach us the absolute inadequacy of knowledge, however perfected, to sustain, without the basis of religion, either the virtues of private life, or the weight of national interests, let us suffer ourselves to be roused into conviction by evidences which are ocular and palpable. Go into your public libraries, enriched by the literature of the classical states of ancient times, and see them crowded also with their mutilated marbles, brought from the fallen monuments of their greatness, and saved from the final wastes of time and barbarism, to be placed in monitory collocation with the 'wisdom of this world,' mocking its imbecility; as though Providence had thereby designed to teach us, that length of days is the sole gift of that wisdom whose beginning is 'the fear of the Lord,' and whose great lesson is 'to depart from evil.' Athens mourning along the galleries of our public museums, over the frail ægis of her Minerva, admonishes us to put our trust within the shadow of the impenetrable shield of the truth of the living God."

It is immortality that constitutes the true dignity of man; and it is this which supplies the true motive to affectionate and persevering exertion in the inculcation of Divine truth upon the youthful mind.

"Yesterday," says Mr. Watson, "that child was nothing; but when will it cease to be? Never! Immortality is written upon it, and the inscription is indelible, for it was traced by the finger of God. The mind has but begun its play; its instincts and its faculties but now move with incipient life. Even dull and worthless matter is of older date. 'Of old thou didst lay the foundation of the earth.' Ages of history passed before it was said of him, 'A child is born into the world.'—History will continue its annals, matter its combinations, the heavens their course; but he shall survive them all. The revolutions of ages shall be forgotten, the high events of life chase each other from the stage, 'the fashion of this world pass away,' a period may arrive when it shall require an effort of even a perfected memory to recall the events accounted the most important on earth; 'the heavens shall pass away with a great noise,' and leave the spaces they have occupied to silence and to nothing; but the child set in the midst of us 'shall then *be*.' The basis of its existence cannot be shaken; but in those countless ages which its existence must fill, never let it be forgotten that it will be a happy spirit before the throne of God, or a hopeless outcast from his heaven. What then, if it depend on you in any degree to stamp bliss on that immortality, 'to save a soul from death,' can I call forth your pious cares in the service of the institutions you have espoused, by a more powerful motive; by a motive of which you can be more sensible? I know that other motives of great power are in operation, and I would not undervalue them. Your triumphs are in the first order of civil and moral achievements; but they all terminate here,—'to save a soul from death,' is the crowning conquest. You save from great and afflictive vices; that is much. You preserve that virgin innocence from pollution; you spare the feelings of that mother who might, but for your institutions, have been doomed to count her days of grief, and nights of anguish, by the pulsations of a broken heart. You rescue that youth from habits of destructive folly and

shame, 'from the strange woman whose house leads to death, and whose feet take hold of hell.' You purge the mass out of which a future generation is to be formed, and prepare elements for a better state of society; but the power of doing more than this is given you, and the very possibility of influencing the eternal felicity of a spirit of man never to lose its being or its consciousness, is animating, and ought to arouse your energy, and give perseverance to its application. What, if you are the honoured instruments of giving any considerable proportion of the immortal spirits committed in infancy to your care, to the Churches of Christ on earth, and to the general assembly of heaven! This is not mere possibility; it is probable; in some cases it is certain."

There were several coincidences connected with the progress of the Methodist missions to which Mr. Watson often adverted, as striking indications of providential interference. As the funds of the society increased, promising fields of labour presented themselves, and invited cultivation; and in no instance have willing labourers been wanting.—Mr. Watson was often affected and encouraged, when he saw successive companies of young men arrive in London, burning with zeal for the salvation of the world, cheerfully resigning all the endearments of kindred and of home, and departing to their several destinations, amidst the prayers and blessings of Christian people. So thoroughly was his mind imbued with the missionary spirit, that he sometimes expressed an earnest wish to accompany these "messengers of the Churches" to heathen countries, and share with them in the glorious toil of teaching Christianity to savage men.

Early in November, 1818, Mr. Watson, accompanied by his friend and colleague, as missionary secretary, Mr. Bunting, visited Bristol, whence several missionaries were about to embark for the West Indies. These were Messrs. Pennock, Hirst, Marshall, Ames, Adams, and Hartley; and the secretaries were requested by the committee to assist at their ordination in that city. The service was conducted in the King-street chapel. Mr. Watson preached; Mr. Bunting then stated the objects and order of the solemnity, requesting the missionaries to give an account of their religious experience, their call to the ministry, and views in undertaking the missionary work. The Rev. Walter Griffith proceeded with the ordination service, assisted by the missionary secretaries, the Rev. Messrs. Thomas Wood, Robert Smith, Dermott, Waddy, Henshaw, and others; and the brethren were set apart by imposition of hands. On the following evening Mr. Bunting preached in St. Philip's chapel, on the subject of Christian missions, and the duty of Christians to support and aid them. This was an occasion of unusual solemnity. Several preachers from the adjoining circuits were present; and the congregations were exceedingly large. The earnestness with which the people united in prayer for these young ministers of Jesus Christ was very affecting; and the services left a deep and holy impression upon many minds.

Addressing the missionaries in the course of this sermon, Mr. Watson said, "A minister of Christ living to himself is the most pitiable object on which the eye can fall. He has assumed a profession of self denial, and he is self indulgent; he has entered a calling which is denominated holy, and he has been secular; he has taken the over-

sight of souls, and he has looked only to his own interests. He has himself slumbered, when his business was to keep the world awake. To him was committed the cause of Christ, which he was to advance; and he has been indifferent to the general movement, if his department of the machine has had activity enough to grind him his daily bread. What will that servant say when his Lord cometh? And come he will. How will he appear, when confronted with apostles and apostolic men, into whose labours he has entered, and who dropped before him a mantle of spirit and of zeal which he has been too slothful to take up? 'God shall smite thee thou whited wall.' 'Give an account of thy stewardship,' shall, ere long, rouse thee from thy slumber. Then the warnings thou hast softened, then the promises thou has criminally applied, then the souls thou hast neglected, then the sick beds thou hast forsaken, then the solemn duties thou hast slumbered over, shall all start into recollection. O terrible day, when judgment shall begin at the house of God, and unfaithful ministers shall be singled out for eminence of shame and signal punishment!

"For you, my dear brethren, we have better hopes. At your first entrance upon the ministry of Jesus, you have given proof that the principle of the text has been planted in mighty operation within you. You go to live, not to yourselves, or the high and arduous missionary path would not have invited you. But water the principle by your daily prayers, and your daily watchings, that though we see you not for many intervening years, and some of you, or some of us, not till the day when we shall all stand together before the judgment seat of Christ, 'we may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.' Take the apostle of the Gentiles for your model. Next to Christ, you cannot have a greater. See him live, not unto himself, but to the Lord. Have you made sacrifices? Count them all but dross, that you may win Christ. Are you anxious for knowledge? Let it be the most excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ. Have you intercourse with men? Let it be in meekness and condescension, that you may gain some. Will your lot be various? Learn how to be abased, and how to abound. Every where, and in all things, be instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. Let the love of Christ constrain you; and, knowing the terrors of the Lord, persuade men. Have you the care of Churches? Like him, make prayers to God for them day and night with tears. Aim at once at his lofty magnificence, and his tender condescensions; at his bold daring, and his flowing sympathies. And, finally, like him, look constantly to the day of Christ, that then it may appear you have neither run in vain, nor laboured in vain. One approving smile of your Lord then will compensate any labour, any suffering. All will be for ever swallowed up in the unutterable happiness which will follow that sentence, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'"

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Watson's Address in the City-Road Chapel, on the Appointment of a Number of Missionaries—His Views of the Missionary Character and Work—Report of the Missionary Society for the Year 1818—Unsettled State of the Nation—Mr. Watson's loyal and patriotic Exertions—Letter to Miss Smith—Embarrassed State of the Mission Fund—Appeal to the Public in its behalf—Annual Meeting of the Missionary Society in 1819—Sir Alexander Johnston—Conference of 1819—Pastoral Address to the Methodist Societies—Instructions to the Wesleyan Missionaries—First Report of the General Chapel Fund.

Not long after his return to London, Mr. Watson was called to assist in a service, similar to that at Bristol, when another band of missionaries were solemnly set apart for the work of the ministry among the heathen. This service took place in the City-Road chapel, Dec. 29th; when Mr. Watson delivered an address to the congregation. The missionaries were, the Rev. Messrs. Hume, Roberts, Stead, Bott, and Allen, who were bound for Ceylon; Mr. Fletcher, for Bombay; and Mr. Archbell, for South Africa. The following is the substance of Mr. Watson's address. It was found among his papers after his decease :—

You, my brethren, have often met together in this house of prayer, on occasions in which solemnity and joy have mingled their influence upon your feelings, and led you to exclaim, "Surely this is no other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven!"

Many of you cannot enter its walls without being reminded of the years of the right hand of the Most High, and of your obligations to him and his cause. You have gone with the multitude of them that kept holiday; you have said, "O come, let us go up to the house of the Lord;" you have entered his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.

You have not often heard the joyful summons to your places in this sanctuary on an occasion more important, or more strongly connected with your religious feelings, than the present. Seven young men are before you, who have offered themselves as messengers to the heathen; who, having had a good report of the Church, the approbation of its ministers, and the sanction of the committee appointed to manage our missions, after being set apart by solemn prayer, according to apostolic usage, and receiving the right hand of fellowship from their brethren in the ministry, are about to depart to preach in pagan lands, to announce the name of a yet unknown Saviour to millions ready to perish, to attempt the extension of the kingdom of Christ, and in the name of the Lord to set up the banners of a holy fight, where Satan has had an almost undisturbed dominion for ages of deepening darkness, and multiplying misery.

O, if we have a heart to cherish and command the enterprises of holy zeal, to hail the revival of the apostolic spirit, to feel concerned for that cause for which the Saviour, whose birth we celebrate, died upon a cross, its warmest, its holiest emotions are due to such an occasion. Thus the primitive Church took up the cause and the cares of its missionaries. They suffered them not to steal, as it were, from the communion of saints, to scenes of difficult labour and probable

suffering, unblessed, uncheered, uncommended to the Lord. Even in an age when the Holy Spirit selected his agents by miraculous indication, extraordinary calls were not thought to discharge the obligation of human co-operation. In the case of the separation of Saul and Barnabas, the message was not to them, but to the Church. It was said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereto I have called them." The call was the Lord's; the act of separation was theirs; and thus they went, supported by the sympathies, and assisted by the prayers, of those who loved their work, and them for their work's sake.

Happy state of feeling and principle in the Church, when every individual looked round with anxious eye upon the distant fields of missionary labour, and engaged his heart to pray that the work of the Lord might appear to his servants; and when every Christian missionary would encourage himself in the Lord, by recollecting that wherever the name of Christ was named, there the prayers of saints were ascending to God in his behalf. We are returning again, I trust, to this true and natural state of Christian feeling. The Church begins to feel its high designation, as the light of the world. The assembly of this evening is an encouraging proof that this spirit is in activity. You are come to this service because you love the cause, and because you love them who engage in it. Nor are weighty considerations wanting why we should, in the solemn services of this evening, commend them to your regards, and, above all, to your intercessions with God. We thus commend them,

1. Because of the work. It is a work connected with consequences of the highest magnitude on which the thought of man can dwell.—They go to preach "all the words of this life" to men in a state of guilt and condemnation. The object of their preaching is the salvation of the souls of men; and the probability is, that without either their ministry, or another of a similar kind, the people to whom they are sent would not be saved. Now in proportion as we believe the truths of God's word, and realize the awful emphasis of the loss of a human soul, our hearts must be engaged in such a work as that which is assigned us this evening. Did we stand on the shore of an ocean rolling in the tempest, and witness a vessel upon the rocks; the crew stretching out their hands to the shore, and making signs for immediate help; no heart could witness the scene without the most intense and painful interest. Were a few mariners to put off in a boat, exposing themselves, to save the crew,—now themselves apparently buried in the waves, now rising above, and yet with dauntless hearts braving the billows, and making for the wreck,—which of you would not make common cause with those generous men, and beseech the God of heaven to preserve their lives, and crown with success the effort of their humanity to save the perishing crew from the devouring deep? Such are the sentiments with which we ought to contemplate the enterprise of these young men; such the interest in their success; such the earnest prayers with which we are to follow them. For know that not the lives of a few men are at stake. The souls of men are descending into darkness and misery everlasting. Wave after wave sweeps away its myriads; and in the agony of descending to perdition, the people call for the help which only we who have the Gospel can give.

But the importance of the work they are engaged in is not to be estimated by the part only which will be assigned to the missionaries before you. They are a band, whose hearts God hath touched with compassion in behalf of the perishing heathen; and many, we trust, will be the individuals whom they will rescue from vice, misery, and ruin. And happy will they be, after all their toils and danger, if they bring them off safely into the peaceful haven of the Church, and to the shores of a better world. The people thus saved will be their joy, and the crown of their rejoicing. But the sending of them forth is only a part of a system which is now in operation for the salvation of a world; and from that circumstance the work derives importance. The missionary system is that alone on which the hope of a fallen world can rest. After all the experiments which have been made, no man of reason can hope for the moral advancement of the world from any other means. The world needs the strongest remedy. This is now confessed. The false views on this subject, which have been long cherished, are now dissipated. Once we were led up the mountain to see the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them. Natural religion exerted her benign sway; the law written on the heart commanded more authoritatively than that contained in the perfect revelation of Jesus. We were amused by divines with the theory of various dispensations, all differing in their degrees of light, but equal in point of safety; with dissertations on pagan virtue by philosophers; with descriptions of the virtues of savage life by novelists; but we were then led up the mountain, as our Saviour was led, by the deceiver. Like him, too, we now see that world lying in wickedness, which kindled his love, and led him to his cross. The gaudy vision is vanished; and all around are

> "Sights of wo,
> Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
> And rest can never dwell;"

and only differing from hell in this, that we cannot add,

> "Hope never comes."

Yes, thank God, there is hope; but it is in the Gospel taken by missionaries. Every means but this has been tried, and has failed. The experiment is now making by the Gospel; and if the result proposed be, to give truth to every mind of man, to destroy their superstitions, to abolish their crimes and cruelty, to bind up society by the bond of morals, to unite all in one happy family, and to restore all to God, with what feelings ought the grand process to be watched! what eagerness of curiosity! what earnestness of wish! If this fail, the world sinks for ever; if it succeed, everlasting honour shall surround the name of your Saviour, and the triumphs of Christianity be sounded to the bounds of earth. In this process Christ interests himself; it is the travail of his soul; angels watch it from their thrones of light; and if our hearts are right with God and his cause, we shall watch it too. Success dawns upon us already; the work is in progress; trophy after trophy is erected; "Bel boweth down, and Nebo stoopeth;" and the fervent prayers and efforts of the Church, perseveringly applied, shall at length effect the glorious consummation.

The youths before you are agents in this system. To them the application of it is, in fact, confided. On even them great results may depend; for who can tell what God will effect by instruments of his own choosing? A single effort in some new direction, the forbearance of patience for a short time, or a bold enterprise of zeal, may, even in their case, connect itself with a success not to be estimated. Individually, they are nothing; but connect them with the great agency which God has set in motion, and they are mighty in his hands. It is thus you draw the pebble from the brook; itself, when separate, is as insignificant an instrument as can be supposed; but you connect it with the sling and the arm of David, and them with the name of the God of the armies of Israel; and the giant form of paganism, which had long bidden defiance to the Almighty himself, in the midst of its vauntings lies prostrate in death.

2. We commend these young men to your prayers because of the qualifications with which it is necessary they should be endowed, in order to success in the work which will this night be committed to them. What are those qualifications? We estimate them too lightly to suppose that without either their or your continued prayers they should ever be invested with them.

An unwearied laboriousness. "Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed." These words form a proper motto for every minister; but they ought to be written as on tablets of brass before every missionary. The greatest examples of laborious zeal have been missionaries: Christ, who went about doing good; and St. Paul, at whose very name the heart of every missionary ought to take fire.—He was ever forgetting the things behind, like a racer in full course. That one man filled the vast Roman empire with the sound of salvation.

Another essential missionary qualification is a rigid self denial. No man can be a Christian without this; but in a missionary every virtue must be carried to its full dimensions. All must be great and high, because his work is such. His body must be denied. "I keep my body under" subjection, said the great missionary. His ease must be denied: "In labours more abundant." His love of life must be denied; like St. Paul, he must neither start from perils by sea, land, robbers, nor false brethren. His literary taste must be often denied: "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." His own will, and even sense of right, must be denied: he must not please himself: "If eating flesh cause my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth."

To the missionary an extraordinary endowment of zeal is necessary. Without this, indeed, these young men would not have appeared before you this evening; but it is not enough that the flame should now burn. It is fanned by conversation, by reading, by the hope of success; but there are circumstances of a different kind into which many of them will be thrown. The zeal of the missionary is to live in solitude and discouragement, and in apparent reverses. It is to animate him when none shall feed the fire; and when all shall join to repress it. When hope itself languishes, it must be a flame to burn with steady brightness, and stimulate the soul to labours and perseverance, when many waters shall pour themselves out to quench it.

Another missionary qualification is meekness. "The servant of

God must not strive." In meekness he must instruct those that are without. The reason why this virtue is to exist in the greatest degree in a missionary is, because it is there more frequently called into exercise. In a work untried and new, much difference in opinion may arise between him and his brethren; and surely a mutual forbearance is necessary where each may be wrong in judgment. He will meet with sights of folly and sin to stir his spirit within him; and he ought to be mindful lest they stir up other passions beside love and pity. The spirit of St. Paul was stirred at Athens, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry; yet his sermon was not passionate. Above all, while the missionary will meet with persons bearing the same holy name, he may have no co-operation from them. They will look at things with other aspects, and possess much less of that noble daring than he feels; or they may be traitors to the cause, and openly or secretly obstruct him: yet still the servant of God is not to strive; no, though he see the work of years blasted, and he walks mournfully round the wrecks of his prayers, his tears, his labours. Even then, he is to commit his cause to Him that judgeth righteously, and lay his hand upon his mouth.

Patience, too, is an essential missionary virtue. We mean not only a willingness to suffer, but to wait for success. He whose spirit can only act from one feeling is not the man for this work. It is a work into which principle is to be carried; and he only is qualified for it whose heart, when it leans upon the great principles of duty, catches new inspiration from the touch, and hastens onward in the path of labour. Let neither missionaries nor people deceive themselves. The pagan world is a field where much is to be removed, where the growth is slow, where the blights are frequent. Evil habits are to be overcome; the power of a polluted and distorted imagination to be controlled: and sometimes even Christian Churches are prematurely formed. An impatient man would have given up some of the most important missions in the early periods of their existence. Duty belongs to the missionary. The times and seasons are in the hand of God.

We might enlarge the catalogue of virtues essentially and appropriately Christian, but time forbids. Suffice it to say, that they must be complete in number, and complete in maturity. The ordinary man and the extraordinary work would ill agree. But why have we made this enumeration? To impress upon you the necessity of your prayers now, and of your constant prayers hereafter. If these were qualifications to be learned from books, we could meet the case of these men by adding to their libraries; if schools could furnish them, we could provide them masters; but they are from God alone,—from the abiding of his Spirit, from his special operation. Such operations no power, no wisdom, no money can command; but they are commanded by the prayers of saints, when the Church cries out, "Let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation."

3. We commend our brethren to your prayers, because, great as are the requisite qualifications for their work, and justly as we may expect that Divine aid will be engaged in their behalf, their dangers require that they should be upheld by the fervent prayers of the faithful.

They are men; and, "Lord, what is man!" Place him where you will, give him the care of souls, the ministry of the word of life, the most solemn and the highest condition in which a human being can be placed; yet he is encompassed with the infirmity of his nature. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." The man and the missionary are as opposed to each other, as flesh to spirit, and earth to heaven.

As men, you have a strong self love; as missionaries, you must love your neighbour, not as yourselves, but better than yourselves. As men, you are lovers of ease; as missionaries, you must love labour. As men, your hearts cleave to father, mother, and country; as missionaries, you must hearken, and forget your father's house, and find a house wherever there is a soul to save. As men, you cannot but be desirous of honour; as missionaries, you must welcome reproach, and wear it as the signet which authenticates your mission, and adorns your character. As men, you shrink from suffering; as missionaries, you must rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. As men, you might be tempted to leave your work in pursuit of earthly advantages; as missionaries, your riches must be exclusively in the souls you are the instruments of saving, the happiness you diffuse, in the love of the children of your schools, the affection of those whom you turn from darkness to light: having food and raiment, you are therewith to be content. As men, you are self willed; as missionaries, your will is to be lost in the will of God. But this dominion of the missionary over the man will not be established without a struggle; and it is a glorious victory, the noblest moral victory that ever the Church presents to us; and it is attained only by fervent prayer.

There is another consideration which exists in the case of most missionaries, and in those now before you,—they are youths. They must generally be so from necessity. Youth only can grow familiar with climate, attain language, and possess enterprise: but let their youth plead for them. Let it not say in vain, "Pray for us." We all know the dangers of youth at home, surrounded and supported as they are by example and influence. We know the dangers of young ministers from pride, from inexperience, from error, though fathers in Christ are at our right hand and our left; yet nothing is impossible with God. The youthful Timothy and Titus rank among the highest names of the Christian Church. From the prayers these men will offer, and from those you will join to them, though they are men, we confidently hope for virtues more than human; though youths, we expect a wisdom beyond their years; gravity, meekness, and "sound speech which cannot be condemned;" examples of the believers "in word, in conversation, in charity, spirit, faith, purity."

Lastly, we commend them to your prayers because they are your agents in a work to which you have solemnly pledged yourselves.

This work is not theirs exclusively, but yours. You go not to the heathen. They go for you, and in your name. They are, according to the apostolic designation, "the messengers of the Churches." In this character you are deeply interested in them, that, as your messengers and representatives, they should honour your religious profession, and exhibit your purity, your religious zeal, your Christian wishes, in

the pagan world; that, as your messengers, they should deliver the messages you send by them, the Gospel message, unadulterated, without defect, not preaching another Gospel; that, as your messengers, they should bear your message widely, as you would wish it to be borne. How widely is that? To all within the reach of their voice, to all they meet, you wish them to proclaim your Saviour, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God.

You will not then dismiss them without your best wishes; without some token that you are in earnest in sending them. You will not, after they are gone, dismiss them from your thoughts. You will be anxious to know how the message has been received. If they meet with trials, you will sympathize with them; if with future sorrow, you will weep with them; if with success, you will triumph with them. Remember, they are your messengers; and if you wish success to the message, pray earnestly, pray for the messenger.

And now, having commended our beloved brethren to your prayers, give me leave, in conclusion, to congratulate you on the encouraging fact, that the intercessions you have already offered for the prosperity of the cause of Christ have received many cheering and marked answers. You have prayed that labourers might be raised, and sent forth. The prayer has been answered. Never were there so many ready to offer themselves for this service. Few of the Churches feel a want. We, at least, through the Divine mercy, have none. The men, too, are such as none but God could raise up. They know the truths they are about to teach; they are witnesses that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. They have gone through the sorrows of repentance; they have felt the personal want of a Saviour; they have heard his voice of forgiveness, and felt his arm of salvation. They will not deal in the false commerce of a truth unfelt. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, they will persuade men. Knowing the love of Christ, they can commend him to others. Like the two disciples, to Nathanael, having first themselves been with Jesus, they can say, "Come and see."

You have prayed for success; and you have been heard in no ordinary degree. Is it not encouraging that you have one hundred ministers employed in this work; and all, as far as we know, usefully,—some of them eminently so? Is it not a delightful reflection, that you number in your societies, in the beautiful islands of the west, more than twenty thousand persons, chiefly negroes, slaves, and once pagans, who crowd your places of worship, listen with delight to the same Gospel that you hear, sing the same hymns of praise, and rejoice in hope of the same heaven? You have mingled your light with the light of others; and you give it both to the western and southern shores of Africa; and there are who rejoice in its rising. The palm groves of Ceylon, alas! too often resounding with the names of demons, begin to hear that name which is above every other. You have, then, your places of worship, your schools, and your missionaries, who run to and fro, that knowledge may be increased. You have begun in continental India; and the door is opening before you. Take along with your successes those greatly important ones of other societies, who are engaged in the same common cause; and though Protestant missions are of so late a date, and as yet so contracted in operation, even now

you may exclaim, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things;" and you feel all the glow of hope, and the repose of confidence, while you repeat again the concluding prayer, "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory!"

With these encouragements you will send forth the brethren before you; but while they are employed in their work, let us not forget that we are to be attentive to ours. An important share of it devolves upon us, though the message must be carried by them. It is ours to cultivate the spirit of holy zeal at home, while they exemplify it abroad. It is ours to engage as many prayers, and as many contributions, beside our own, as our influence may command. It is ours to keep the light and life of religion beaming and glowing in our Churches, that nominal Christians at home, and the heathen abroad, may share the benefit with us. If our country be the central sun of the moral system of the world, let us do our part to purge the spots from its surface, and remove the clouds from before its face, that it may pour its full influence upon all lands; and let us do this the more, as we see the day approaching,—that day, when we shall be silent in darkness. What thine hand findeth to do, do quickly; for thou art man. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." What are worldly hopes and fears to a being thus circumstanced; ever walking round the brink of his grave? Into that, whatever is worldly must descend with us. That which is of the earth is earthly. But there are acts over which no such destiny presides. They have a life beyond our own; we shall meet them again, in their glorious results, when we rise from the dust of earth. The prayers we have offered, the riches we have sanctified, the labours we have undertaken for Christ and his cause, shall roll on, accumulating their effects through time; they will spread over seas and continents; and they will be seen when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God. You put imperishable seed into the hands of the brethren before you, to sow in fields you will never visit. They must fulfil their day of labour. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand." Though that day may be prolonged by your prayers, it will be but as a span. Perhaps we shall not see them again till the heavens be no more; but the work to which they are commissioned will not perish with them. When these heavens are no more, you will see the fruit of your Christian benevolence in sending them forth. You will see the trophies won from paganism, before the throne of Him by whose power they obtained them. They shall bring them from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south; and they shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

This admirable address, delivered to a large assembly of Christian people, met for the purpose of commending to God in prayer a company of missionaries, just about to sail to their several destinations, in different quarters of the globe, and not expecting all to meet again in this world, shows the depth of pious feeling which Mr. Watson cherished in connection with the missionary work. The missionaries, in his estimation, were called by God; their qualifications were his gift; their success depended entirely upon his blessing; in order to their continued usefulness in their labour, deep personal piety was indispensable; and that piety was to be maintained by incessant prayer

on their part, to which, also, the supplications of the Church might essentially contribute. His sympathy with the missionaries was affectionate and strong. He greatly admired their piety, zeal, and self denial; regarding them, under God, as the hope and salvation of heathen lands, and therefore as placed under the special care of Divine Providence. The trials which awaited them in future life, and the tender recollections which would often occur to them in the midst of their solitary and discouraging labours, awakened in his generous mind the kindest emotions. It was his practice earnestly to exhort the people to sanctify their contributions by constant prayer; and to identify the missionary work with their daily employments, and their own spiritual prosperity.

The report of the Methodist missions for 1818, which was published about the close of the year, represented those institutions in a state of rapid advancement. The income of the society had risen to somewhat above twenty thousand pounds; the number of missionaries had been increased to one hundred and three; and the members in society, under the pastoral care of the missionaries, was upward of twenty-three thousand. After specifying the sums received from the various districts, the writer of the report makes the following appeal in behalf of the missions. It shows the intense interest which he still took in their stability and enlargement:—

"Highly gratifying as it is to the committee to be able to state this increase of the fund, and particularly as it marks the wider extension of those principles and feelings to which the missionary cause owes its efficiency, they must state that it is not yet equal to the support of the missions already established, and to enable the committee to meet those calls for help which are continually reaching them from various parts; enterprises which present the best promise of success, and which it will be most painful to deny. Some of them, indeed, have already received the sanction of the conference, and have met with the ardent approbation of the friends of our missions generally. If the resources of the friends of the Methodist missions were exhausted, the committee would be obliged to pass by these openings and prospects with a sigh; and retire to lament that those souls to whose aid they have been summoned must be left to perish for lack of knowledge. But they have other views. There are extensive districts in which no missionary societies have yet been formed; and circuits and parts of circuits where district societies already exist, where the plans of missionary societies have not been introduced, or fully acted upon. Perhaps there are few places where, by increasing the number of collectors, or by the collectors applying themselves with renewed energy to their important office, the receipts might not be greatly advanced; and, with the knowledge of these facts, the committee cannot despair of larger supplies. There is a large body of Christians in every place disposed by God himself to support and extend his cause; who pray, with increased emphasis, 'Thy kingdom come;' and, animated by the signs of the coming of the Son of man, jealous for his honour, and grieved that he is so little known, are willing to contribute with liberality and readiness, to those plans which propose his glory, and the extension of his kingdom. The aid of such persons need only be solicited to be obtained; and as no means appear so effectual as the

plans of missionary societies, the committee trust that they will be carried into full effect where they are already established, by the superintendence of the preachers, the attention of the committees, and the activity of the collectors; and that, where they are not commenced, they will be adopted at the first opportunity. To provide means for the supply of the Christian ministry to the destitute nations of the world is now one of the special duties which Providence, by affording so many opportunities, has devolved upon Christians of the present day. This is their vocation. The conversion of the world is the end at which they are steadily to look; and every exertion by which that great result may be forwarded is now to be regarded as entering into our imperative duties, and as the work by which we are to glorify God. The state of the world, as laid before us by the information which is constantly accumulating, cannot be received with indifference. The spirit of every good man must be stirred within him. The facilities afforded by Providence for relieving his dark and fallen condition cannot be without meaning or intention. They are the indications of the finger of God, and they point to our work. We may not, except in a few honourable instances, be prepared to undergo missionary labours, and make missionary sacrifices, personally; but there are important methods in which we may serve the work abroad by our diligence at home. Our prayers will aid it; it will be aided by our contributions; but they most effectually aid it who, in addition to these means, employ their influence and counsel in bringing into one united and regular course of contribution and supply the offerings of the Christian public. Constant supply will be thus afforded for constant expenditure; and every missionary institution will be conducted without embarrassment, and with confidence as to its support. With every accession to the Church of Christ, there will, by such arrangements, be an accession to those funds by which the wants of the world are to be supplied. By such means the work will proceed, enlarging with every year, moving with accelerated force, comprehending larger spheres of usefulness, till the supplies of the Church shall be commensurate with the wants of the world. Thus will Zion become the glory of all lands, and those great events be accomplished, the prospect of which is the inspiration of the co-operating zeal of missionaries and people; and which are assured to us as the reward of authorized and persevering efforts. 'The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of God and his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.'"

The situation of England at the beginning of the year 1819 was exceedingly gloomy and discouraging. In consequence of the general depression of trade, the condition of the poor, especially in some of the manufacturing districts, was very distressing; and the spirit of infidelity and of insubordination was extensively diffused. The minds of a large proportion of the community were greatly exasperated against their rulers by democratic orators at public meetings, and by a licentious press. These things were rendered the more alarming by an unhappy quarrel between the highest personages in the state, the ground of which was afterward made a subject of parliamentary investigation. It was impossible that Mr. Watson should be an indifferent spectator, when the institutions of the country were seriously menaced,

and principles were in operation which went to subvert the frame work of society; and, by necessary consequence, to endanger personal freedom and safety. Previously to this period he had united with several other persons, like minded with himself, in the establishment of a weekly newspaper, partly religious, and conducted upon loyal and constitutional principles, to meet the exigency of the times; for it was felt to be a serious evil that pious families should have no means of obtaining a knowledge of public affairs, except the perusal of papers, many parts of which were extemely objectionable in point of sentiment, and some of which were even intended to bring all legitimate authority into contempt. The property of this paper was vested in persons of the Wesleyan denomination; but the work was extensively patronized by clergymen, and other pious individuals belonging to the established Church. The columns of this journal not unfrequently contained articles written by Mr. Watson; in which he always appeared as the able and zealous advocate of government and of social order. This publication was carried on for some years, and was of essential service at that juncture, in preserving the minds of religious people from the principles and schemes of men who sought to engage them in the cause of revolution. Whatever alteration time had rendered necessary in the national institutions, Mr. Watson felt ought to be made by the proper authorities, and not by clamorous demagogues, whose object was not reform but plunder; and whose spirit, notwithstanding their noisy professions, was not patriotism but selfishness. Mr. Watson's loyalty, which originated in Christian principle, and had been consistently maintained through many years, was greatly strengthened by the generous protection which the government afforded to the missions in the several colonies, and especially in the West Indies, where the local authorities were often opposed to the instruction of the slave population. He found his majesty's government not only accessible in all cases of persecution which were brought before them; but always ready to interpose in behalf of the oppressed missionary and his sable charge. As these missions were so dear to Mr. Watson's heart, he loved the men who threw around them the shield of a generous protection; while, as a Christian, he reverenced them for their office' sake, as the "ministers of God for good."

The following letter, addressed to a pious lady, to whom his ministry appears to have been rendered a means of salvation, shows the affectionate interest which he took in the spiritual welfare of a young convert; and the wisdom with which he could build up individual believers on their most holy faith:—

To Miss M. E. Smith, at J. Morton's, Esq., Milbank, Runcorn, Cheshire.

London, March 23*d*, 1819.

My Dear Miss Smith,—There needed no apology on your part for writing; and when you feel disposed to write again, I beseech you use none. I shall be always happy to hear of your welfare; and if at any time any advice of mine shall be deemed by you of any importance, it shall be at your service. From the time I had the pleasure of seeing you at Bedford, I have had a pleasing recollection of your society.

The change which has passed upon your mind justly calls for your grateful acknowledgments to God, its author. The moment in which your heart was effectually turned to your heavenly Father, in full choice of his favour and salvation, was the most important in your life, and the most important you will ever experience. It introduced you to new relations, to new enjoyments, to new hopes. It enabled you to say, what you could never say before, "Now I am in a state in which I need but persevere to secure every interest of my being in time and eternity." "Behold," said your Saviour in that moment, "I have set before thee an open door, which no man can shut."

While this calls for all the love of your heart to Him, let it remind you of your renewed and enlarged obligations. A treasure so valuable ought to be well guarded; a birthright so high is not to be bartered for Esau's mess of pottage. "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him," with the same simplicity, child-like dependence, oneness of object and motive; remembering that you have entered upon a race, and, of course, are to press forward. Allow me to suggest the following rules:—1. Rest not a moment without the *felt presence* of your God. 2. To this end, repose a full and daily confidence in the merits and intercession of your Saviour, through whom alone you can *draw near* to God. 3. Maintain the inward spirit of prayer, and grateful acknowledgment to God in all things. 4. Fill up leisure moments with useful thinking, and reading, and converse. 5. Seize opportunities of doing good. If you have time to visit the sick bed occasionally, or to do good in any way, you will thereby gain good in return, by the excitement of your own religious affections. As to daily intercourse with others, the following rule is excellent:—

> "Present with God by recollection seem,
> Yet present by your cheerfulness with men."

I am happy to have been any instrument of good to you by the blessing of God; and it will give me additional pleasure to know that you "stand fast in the Lord."

I write in the midst of a bustle; for leisure I have little. The interlineations will show this; and I have only time to add how truly,

I am yours very affectionately.

P. S. I regret that I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you at Warrington, or Liverpool, as I shall not be at either meeting.

Great as was the liberality of the friends of the Methodist missions, it was exceeded by the zeal and enterprise of the managing committee, who were so affected by the wants of the heathen, and the loud calls for help, that they exhausted the funds of the society, and placed the treasurers considerably in advance. In the month of January, therefore, it was found necessary to make an urgent appeal to the auxiliary societies in the country to renew their efforts in raising supplies. In this appeal it was stated, "There is a benevolence in the public mind, specially interested by missionary objects, which only needs an application and opportunity, in order to engage it in the work of Christ abroad. In this case, a few sacrifices of labour and time are all that is necessary to obtain for our missionary fund a supply,

not only equal to our extended engagements, but which will encourage future efforts for the salvation of a world, yet but very partially visited, and which still exhibits its unhappy millions perishing for lack of knowledge. We commend these considerations to the attention of all who love the Lord Jesus. A calculation has been made, that if every member of the Methodist societies in England and Scotland only were to subscribe or collect for the missionary cause but one penny per week, a sum upward of £40,000 a year would be raised for the support of our missionaries. And surely this is not an extraordinary exertion in any place, when the larger sums of so many of our generous subscribers are taken into the estimate. Surely such an effort can bear little proportion to our personal obligations to Christ; to our obligations to make the 'savour of his name manifest in every place.' Much more than this is already done in many districts; and an equality of exertion through the whole connection appears to be demanded by equal obligations, equal ability, and an equal and laudable desire to share the honours of the zeal and devotion of the Churches for the cause of the common Saviour."

An appeal somewhat similar to this was published in the beginning of May following, evidently the production of the same pen. After a summary account of the state and wants of the several stations occupied by the Wesleyan missionaries, the writer says, "And who is there that will not give his personal aid to swell the tide of that glorious and successful agency which is now, in so many directions, transmitting blessings to the nations of the earth, which, in their influence, shall be felt through every future period of time, and reach into eternity itself?"

To promote the pious and benevolent object for which these appeals were written, Messrs. Bunting and Watson made extensive tours in the north of England as the spring advanced. They attended the anniversaries of missionary societies at Liverpool, Manchester, Derby, Macclesfield, Wakefield, Hull, Sunderland, Shields, and Newcastle; and found that the disposition to farther the good work remained unabated. Notwithstanding the pressure of the times, the subscriptions and collections generally exceeded those of any former year.—The meetings were numerously attended; and great interest was excited by the details which these able advocates of the cause gave concerning the work of God in foreign countries.

The annual meeting of the General Wesleyan Missionary Society was held in the City-Road chapel on Monday, May 3d. It was excessively crowded, and Mr. Butterworth was called to the chair.—The union of so many persons of different denominations, which the platform presented, pleading the cause of missions to the pagan world, as the common cause of all Christians, was a sight most grateful to the feelings of Christian charity. Several friends from different parts of the kingdom were present, having come up to celebrate this annual festival, and kindle anew the fire of zeal at a common altar. These circumstances were important, as they showed that the great cause of the evangelization of the world had acquired a growing interest, and that energies more combined and glowing than formerly were put into activity for the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ. The day was most delightful, and zeal for the glory of God, joy in the

progress of truth, and compassion for a perishing world, were called into lively exercise.

At this meeting it fell to the lot of Mr. Watson to second a resolution expressive of thanks to Sir Alexander Johnston, the late chief justise in Ceylon, for his kind service in behalf of the Methodist mission in that island. With respect to the mission in Ceylon, Mr. Watson observed, that all the missionaries then engaged in the work had given the utmost satisfaction to the committee; and their prudent, diligent, and zealous conduct gave them a strong claim upon the support of the Christian public. In reference to the resolution, he would say, it was a cheering consideration, that, when we turned to India, we saw a class of men rising up, whose talents, character, and influence were all consecrated to the encouragement of religion. They lived at a great distance from home, and in a country where opposition to religion would subject them to no reproach, and perhaps give them the praise of prudent politicians; yet even there men were raised up by Providence, holding high official situations, both civil and military, sanctioning and encouraging the efforts which have been made for several years past, to disseminate the Scriptures, and to give the benighted heathen the benefits of the Christian ministry. In this honourable class the name of Sir Alexander Johnston occupied an eminent station. The island of Ceylon was specially indebted to his exertions. He was one of those gentlemen who had gone out, not merely to fill the seats of office, and to exercise authority, but to communicate solid and permanent blessings to the people, to raise the condition of society, to establish moral order, to create religious principle, and to erect imperishable monuments of British power in the exercise of British compassion, and the communication of British intelligence. His wise and comprehensive views on these subjects were in connection with the principles of Christianity. He felt the importance of the labours of Christian missionaries, to raise the moral condition of the pagan population; and the Wesleyan missionaries had found in him an adviser and a friend. To him a large class of slaves in the island were indebted for their liberty, voluntarily conceded by their masters, under his representations; and to elevate minds rendered abject, and make their liberty a substantial benefit, he had been anxious that they should have the benefit of the exertions of missionaries, whose successes among the negroes in the West Indies were known by him, and justly appreciated. This society was under special obligations to Sir Alexander Johnston, for his frequent attendance at the meetings of the committee, for the purpose of giving information respecting the mission in Ceylon, and for his valuable advices. On these subjects Sir Alexander was always accessible; and his opinions equally marked the philosopher, the philanthropist, and the Christian.

At the conference of 1819, which was held in the city of Bristol, it was resolved to present an annual address to the Methodist societies, relating to subjects of general interest, and containing such advices and admonitions as circumstances might render necessary. The nation was then in an unsettled state; political associations of the most mischievous character were formed in various places; and strenuous attempts were made to engage religious people in plans of insubordi-

nation and riot. Mr. Watson was requested to write the first address; and he executed this task in a manner worthy of himself, and of the occasion. In reference to the state of the country, and the duty of Christians in the existing state of things, the address says, "We deeply sympathize with those of you, dear brethren, who, from the pressure of the times, and the suspension of an active commerce, are, in common with thousands of your countrymen, involved in deep and various afflictions. We offer up our prayers to God for you in this dark season of your distresses, that you may not be tempted above what you are able to bear; and that He who comforteth the distressed may comfort you. Cast all your care on God, 'for he careth for you;' and fail not to remember, and to comfort one another with these words, that in heaven you have a better and an enduring substance. In the present changeful scene of things, one event happeneth to the righteous and the wicked; but you are nevertheless still under the care and the eye of your Father in heaven. Such afflictive events he will sanctify to those who trust in him. His promises cannot fail, because he changeth not. He knoweth the way that you take; and when he hath tried you, he will bring you forth as gold. Never fail, dear brethren, to commit your cause to Him, who has a thousand ways to 'deliver the godly out of temptation,' or to render their temptations the overruled instruments of putting them in possession of a good which shall remain their portion and their joy when their spirits shall be for ever beyond the reach of the joys and sorrows of this present state. 'In patience possess ye your souls.'—And remember Him who hath said, 'I will never leave you, nor forsake you.'

"As many of you to whom this measure of national suffering has been appointed reside in places where attempts are making, by 'unreasonable and wicked men,' to render the privations of the poor the instruments of their own designs against the peace and government of our beloved country, we are affectionately anxious to guard all of you against being led astray from your civil and religious duties by their dangerous artifices. Remember you are Christians, and are called by your profession to exemplify the power and influence of religion by your patience in suffering, and by living peaceably with all men. Remember you belong to a religious society which has, from the beginning, explicitly recognized as high and essential parts of Christian duty, to 'fear God, and honour the king;' to submit to magistrates for conscience' sake, and not to speak evil of dignities. You are surrounded with persons to whom these duties are objects of contempt and ridicule. Show your regard for them, because they are the doctrines of your Saviour. Abhor those publications in which they are assailed, along with every other doctrine of your holy religion; and judge of the spirit and objects of those who would deceive you into political parties and associations, by the vices of their lives, and the infidel malignity of their words and writings. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?'

"Be it your care, beloved, who are exposed to this trial, to serve God in all good conscience; to preserve your minds from political agitations; to follow your occupations and duties in life in peaceful seclusion from all strife and tumults; and God will, in his own time, appear by his providence to your relief. We trust our country to

his gracious favour, and doubt not that he will speak good concerning us.

"While this period of suffering continues, we affectionately and earnestly exhort the more opulent members of our societies and congregations, to afford as ample a relief as possible to their brethren in distress. This, we are sure, they are forward to do. The liberal and active benevolence of our friends in every place, and on every charitable occasion, is our glory and joy. We speak this, therefore, merely to put them in remembrance. Many of the suffering household of faith now need their special liberalities; and the kind affection which exists in all our societies toward each other is a sufficient pledge to us, that this suggestion will lead to those acts of sympathizing kindness, which will at once call forth and strengthen that sentiment of brotherly love, which is the distinguishing character of the disciples of Jesus Christ. 'Remember them that are in affliction, as being yourselves also in the body.'

"We are about to depart to our respective scenes of labour for the ensuing year. We met in the spirit of the kindest affection, and are about to separate with increased attachment to each other, to you, and to the work of Christ. We have renewed our pledges of zeal and faithfulness in the strength of Him without whom 'nothing is strong;' and we cast ourselves on his mercy, and your prayers. Beloved brethren, join with us in this renewed dedication of ourselves to God, and to the Church by the will of God. Why do we live, but to do his will, and spread his praise? Let all our thoughts rest in God. To him let us open our spirits for richer supplies of his sanctifying grace, and clearer demonstrations of his presence and love. In simplicity of heart let us follow our Lord, copy his example, walk as he walked, follow his steps of active charity, breathe his calm and loving mind, die like him to all earthly good, and hasten to the end of our course. 'The time is short.' O let us fill it with the fruits and acts of Christian love and zeal; that our last moments may be peace; and that through the meritorious passion of our Divine Saviour we may be accounted worthy to renew our fellowship in his unsuffering kingdom; and be eternally one with Christ, as he is one with the Father!"

These extracts will serve to show the spirit in which this seasonable document was written. It was extensively circulated by the conference, both in the minutes, and in a separate form; and was also reprinted in Manchester, and widely distributed in that town and neighbourhood, just after the well-known riots there. Its influence upon the minds of the Methodist societies was deep; and it contributed, in no small degree, to calm and restrain the agitated spirits of men in various places. Strong and persevering attempts were made by the agents of sedition to engage the co-operation of the Methodists in their mischievous and wicked projects; but by this document, and other means, they were warned of their danger, and placed upon their guard; and not a few of them laboured with zeal and determination, to resist the progress and influence of democratic politics, and to preserve the public tranquillity. The annual addresses of the conference, thus favourably commenced, have been exceedingly beneficial in the Methodist connection. They have strengthened the bond of union between the conference and the societies; and embody important pastoral advices, both

in regard to personal religion, and the various branches of Christian duty. Several of them were drawn up by Mr. Watson, who excelled in this species of composition; and those of them which were the product of his mind served greatly to give a character to the rest.

As the Wesleyan missions continued rapidly to extend, and some of them were carried on under circumstances of difficulty, arising from the peculiar state of society, it was deemed requisite that a code of regulations should be prepared, to which every missionary, on entering upon his work, should declare his assent, and his practical attention to which should be a subject of annual inquiry at the several district meetings; in order that the managing committee, and the supporters of the missions, might be satisfied that their agents kept steadily in view the design of their appointment, and pursued their labour upon a judicious and efficient plan. As early as December 18th, 1817, the committee passed a resolution to this effect; and Mr. Watson was requested to prepare the desired system of rules. With this request he complied; and produced a body of missionary instructions, equally distinguished by practical sense, and Christian piety. Some of them are exclusively applicable to missionaries; but others of them are of general importance to Christian ministers. To the Wesleyan missions they have been of essential benefit. A copy bearing the date of 1818–1819 lies before the writer, bearing the names of the committee and other officers of the society for that year. Whether these instructions had been previously printed, is uncertain. They underwent some verbal alterations, and other improvements, at a subsequent period. As this document shows the principles upon which the Wesleyan missions are conducted, and the spirit of apostolical piety with which Mr. Watson and his colleagues ever attemped to animate them, it is here given entire. It is impossible that missions carried on in this manner should be unsuccessful.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE WESLEYAN MISSIONARIES.

I. We recommend you, in the first place and above all things, to pay due attention to your personal piety; which, by prayer, self denial, holy diligence, and active faith in Him who loved you and gave himself for you, must be kept in a lively, vigorous, and growing state. Set before you constantly the example of the holy apostle: "This one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," Phil. iii, 13, 14. Amidst all your reading, studies, journeyings, preaching, and other labours, let the prosperity of your own souls in the Divine life be carefully cultivated; and then a spirit of piety will dispose you to the proper performance of your ministerial duties; and by a holy reaction, such a discharge of duty will increase your personal religion.

II. We wish to impress on your minds the absolute necessity of using every means of mental improvement with an express view to your great work as Christian ministers. You are furnished with useful books, the works of men of distinguished learning and piety. We recommend to you to acquire an increase of that general knowledge which, if the handmaid of piety, will increase your qualifications for extensive usefulness. But more especially, we press upon you the

absolute necessity of studying Christian divinity, the doctrines of salvation by the cross of Christ, "which things the angels desire to look into." They exercise their minds, which excel in strength, in the contemplation of those precious truths which you are called to explain and illustrate. Let all your reading and studies have a reference to this. You are to teach religion; you must, therefore, understand religion well. You are to disseminate the knowledge of Christianity, in order to the salvation of men; let the Bible, then, be your book; and let all other books be read only in order to obtain a better acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and a greater facility in explaining, illustrating, and applying their important contents. We particularly recommend to you to read and digest the writings of Wesley and Fletcher, and the useful commentaries with which you are furnished; which are designed and calculated to increase your knowledge of the sacred volume. Like the Baptist, you must be "burning and shining lights;" and, therefore, recollect every day, that while you endeavour by reading, meditation, and conversation, to increase your stock of useful knowledge, it is necessary for you to acquire a proportionate increase of holy fervour.

III. We exhort you, brethren, to unity of affection, which will not fail to produce unity of action. Let your love be without dissimulation. In honour prefer one another. On this subject we beseech you to pay a practical regard to the advice of the venerable founder of our societies, the Rev. John Wesley. With his characteristic brevity, he inquires, "What can be done in order to a closer union of our preachers with each other?—Ans. 1. Let them be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of it. 2. Let them pray for an earnest desire of union. 3. Let them speak freely to each other. 4. When they meet, let them never part without prayer. 5. Let them beware how they despise each other's gifts. 6. Let them never speak slightingly of each other in any kind. 7. Let them defend one another's character in every thing, to the utmost of their power. And 8. Let them labour in honour to prefer each the other before himself."

IV. Remember always, dear brethren, that you are by choice and on conviction Wesleyan Methodist preachers; and, therefore, it is expected and required of you, to act in all things in a way consistent with that character. In your manner of preaching, and of administering the various ordinances of God's house, keep closely to the model exhibited by your brethren at home. Indeed, you have solemnly pledged yourselves so to do. You have promised to preach, in the most explicit terms, the doctrines held as Scriptural, and therefore sacred, in the connection to which you belong. We advise, however, in so doing, that you avoid all appearance of controversy, in your mode of stating and enforcing Divine truths. While you firmly maintain that ground which we, as a body, have seen it right to take, cultivate a catholic spirit toward all your fellow labourers in the work of evangelizing the heathen; and aid them to the utmost of your power in their benevolent exertions. You have engaged also to pay a conscientious regard to our discipline. We need not tell you, that all the parts of that discipline are of importance; and that, taken together, they form a body of rules and usages, which appear to meet all the wants of individuals who are seeking the salvation of their souls; and,

under the Divine influence and blessing, are calculated to promote the prosperity of every society. We also particularly press upon your constant attention and observance Mr. Wesley's Twelve Rules of a Helper.

V. We cannot omit, without neglecting our duty, to warn you against meddling with political parties, or secular disputes. You are teachers of religion; and that alone should be kept in view. It is, however, a part of your duty, as ministers, to enforce by precept and example, a cheerful obedience to lawful authority. You know that the venerable Wesley was always distinguished by his love to his country, by his conscientious loyalty, and by his attachment to that illustrious family which has so long filled the throne of Great Britain. You know that your brethren at home are actuated by the same principles, and walk by the same rule; and we have confidence in you, that you will preserve the same character of religious regard to good order, and submission to "the powers that be;" in which we glory. Our motto is, "Fear God, and honour the king;" and we recollect who hath said, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work."

VI. You will, on a foreign station, find yourselves in circumstances very different from those in which you are at home, with regard to those who are in authority under our gracious sovereign. It is probable you will frequently come under their immediate notice and observation. We are, however, persuaded, that while you demean yourselves as you ought, you will be generally favoured with their protection. On your arrival at your stations, you will be instructed what steps to take, in order to obtain the protection of the local governments: and we trust that your subsequent good behaviour toward governors, and all who are in authority, will be such as shall secure to you the enjoyment of liberty to instruct and promote the salvation of those to whom you are sent.

VII. Those of you who are appointed to the West India colonies,—being placed in stations of considerable delicacy, and which require, from the state of society there, a peculiar circumspection and prudence on the one hand, and zeal, diligence, and patient perseverance, on the other,—are required to attend to the following directions, as specially applicable to your mission there:—

1. Your particular designation is, to endeavour the religious instruction and conversion of the ignorant, pagan, and neglected black and coloured population of the island, or station to which you may be appointed, and of all others who may be willing to hear you.

2. Where societies are already formed, you are required to watch over them with the fidelity of those who must give up their account to Him who hath purchased them with his blood, and in whose providence they are placed under your care. Your labours must be constantly directed to improve them in the knowledge of Christianity, and to enforce upon them the experience and practice of its doctrines and duties, without intermingling doubtful controversies in your administrations, being mainly anxious that those over whom you have pastoral care should clearly understand the principal doctrines of the Scriptures, feel their renovating influence upon their hearts, and become "holy in all manner of conversation and godliness." And in order to this, we

recommend that your sermons should consist chiefly of clear expositions of the most important truths of holy writ, enforced with affection and fervour on the consciences and conduct of them that hear you; that you frequently and familiarly explain portions of the Scriptures; and that, as extensively as you possibly can, you introduce the method of teaching children, and the less instructed of the adult slaves and others, by the excellent catechisms with which you are furnished.

3. It is enforced upon you, that you continue no person as a member of your societies, whose "conversation is not as becometh the Gospel of Christ." That any member of society who may relapse into his former habits, and become a polygamist, or an adulterer, who shall be idle and disorderly, disobedient to his owner (if a slave,) who shall steal, or be in any other way immoral or irreligious, shall be put away, after due admonition, and proper attempts to reclaim him from the "error of his way."

4. Before you receive any person into society, you shall be satisfied of his desire to become acquainted with the religion of Christ, and to obey it; and if he has not previously been under Christian instruction, nor baptized, you are, before his admission as a member, diligently to teach him the Christian faith, and the obligations which he takes upon himself by baptism; so as to be assured of his having obtained such knowledge of the principles of religion, and such belief of them, as to warrant you to administer to him that ordinance. Beside this, no person is to be admitted into society, without being placed first on trial, for such time as shall be sufficient to prove whether his conduct has been reformed, and that he has wholly renounced all those vices to which he may have been before addicted.

5. You are to consider the children of the negroes and coloured people of your societies and congregations as a part of your charge; and it is recommended to you, wherever it is practicable and prudent, to establish Sunday or other schools for their instruction. It is to be considered by you as a very important part of your duty as a missionary, to catechise them as often as you conveniently can, at stated periods; and to give your utmost aid to their being brought up in Christian knowledge, and in industrious and moral habits.

6. As in the colonies in which you are called to labour, a great proportion of the inhabitants are in a state of slavery, the committee most strongly call to your recollection what was so fully stated to you when you were accepted as a missionary to the West Indies, that your only business is to promote the moral and religious improvement of the slaves to whom you may have access, without in the least degree, in public or private, interfering with their civil condition. On all persons, in the state of slaves, you are diligently and implicitly to enforce the same exhortations which the apostles of our Lord administered to the slaves of ancient nations, when by their ministry they embraced Christianity:—"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether

he be bond or free," Eph. vi, 5–8. "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons," Col. iii, 22–25.

7. You are directed to avail yourselves of every opportunity to extend your labours among the slaves of the islands where you may be stationed; but you are in no case to visit the slaves of any plantation without the permission of the owner or manager; nor are the times which you may appoint for their religious services to interfere with their owner's employ; nor are you to suffer any protracted meetings in the evening, not even at negro burials, on any account whatever. In all these cases you are to meet even unreasonable prejudices, and attempt to disarm suspicions, however groundless, so far as you can do it consistently with your duties as faithful and laborious ministers of the Gospel.

8. As many of the negroes live in a state of polygamy, or in a promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, your particular exertions are to be directed to the discountenancing and correcting of these vices, by pointing out their evil, both in public and in private, and by maintaining the strictest discipline in the societies. No man living in a state of polygamy is to be admitted a member, or even on trial, who will not consent to live with one woman as his wife, to whom you shall join him in matrimony, or ascertain that this rite has been performed by some other minister; and the same rule is to be applied, in the same manner, to a woman proposing to become a member of society. No female living in a state of concubinage with any person is to be admitted into society so long as she continues in that sin.

9. The committee caution you against engaging in any of the civil disputes or local politics of the colony to which you may be appointed, either verbally, or by correspondence with any persons at home, or in the colonies. The whole period of your temporary residence in the West Indies is to be filled up with the proper work of your mission.—You are not to become parties in any civil quarrel; but are to "please all men for their good to edification;" intent upon the solemn work of your office, and upon that eternal state in the views of which the committee trust you will ever think and act.

10. In cases of opposition to your ministry, which may arise on the part of individuals, or of any of the colonial legislatures, a meek and patient spirit and conduct are recommended to you. You will in particular guard against all angry and resentful speeches, and in no case attempt to inflame your societies and hearers with resentment against your persecutors or opposers. Your business, in such cases, after every prudent means of obtaining relief has failed in your own hands, is with the committee at home; who will immediately take such steps as may secure to you that protection, from a mild and tolerant government, which they hope your peaceable and pious conduct, your labours and successes, will ever merit for you.

N. B. The directions to the West India missionaries are also to be considered as strictly obligatory on all others, as far as they are applicable to the circumstances of their respective stations.

VIII. It is peremptorily required of every missionary in our connection to keep a journal, and to send home frequently such copious abstracts of it as may give a full and particular account of his labours, success, and prospects. He is also required to give such details of a religious kind as may be generally interesting to the friends of missions at home; particularly, accounts of conversions. Only, we recommend to you, not to allow yourselves, under the influence of religious joy, to give any high colouring of facts; but always write such accounts as you would not object to see return in print to the place where the facts reported may have occurred.

IX. It is a positive rule among the Wesleyan Methodists, that no travelling preacher shall "follow trade." You are to consider this rule as binding upon you, and all foreign missionaries in our connection. We wish you to be at the remotest distance from all temptation to a secular or mercenary temper. "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath called him to be a soldier." Independently of the moral and religious considerations which enforce this principle, we here take occasion to remind you, that all your time and energies should be the more sacredly devoted to the duties of your mission, because the committee feel themselves fully pledged to pay an affectionate attention to all your wants, and to afford them every reasonable and necessary supply. And this pledge, they doubt not, the generosity of the friends of missions will, from time to time, enable them to redeem, so long as you continue to regulate your expenses by as much of conscientious regard to economy, as may be found to consist with your health and comfort, and with the real demands of the work of God.

And now, brethren, we commend you to God and the word of his grace. We unite with tens of thousands in fervent prayer to God for you. May he open to you a great door and effectual; and make you, immediately or remotely, the instruments of the salvation of myriads. We shall incessantly pray, that "you may go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; that instead of the thorn may come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory: Amen and Amen."

The first report of the General Chapel Fund was printed in the autumn of 1819, and was put into extensive circulation. It was written by Mr. Watson, and contains many passages of permanent value, especially in reference to the erection of places of worship, and their freedom from pecuniary embarrassment. The following paragraphs are well worthy of preservation:—

"One of the greatest of human charities is the erection and support of places for the public worship of God; and in every age of the Church piety toward God, and religious benevolence to man, have, by such erections, set up the noblest monuments of their power and purity.—The blessedness of such acts has descended upon us. Under roofs reared by other hands we first drew the breath of spiritual life; and the first time we came in simplicity and contrition to the footstool of

God in his public ordinances, we bowed at altars built by the generous piety of persons precedent to ourselves in religious experience; and who, having lived not to themselves, but to God, and his cause on earth, have passed through the courts of earthly temples into the mansions of rest and glory in heaven. It would ill become us to take the fruits of their piety, without being also the imitators of their zeal.—The work which they begun is not completed. The want of places of worship in this country, though so eminent in its religious character, is by all parties of Christians acknowledged. The population has greatly enlarged beyond the measure of the accommodation for the public services of religion; and as the preaching of the Gospel is made successful in bringing men under the influence of holy and devotional habits, the erection and enlargement of places of worship will be still demanded by the necessity of the case. It is a charity inseparably connected with the existence, the exercise, and the extension of religion.

"The great work which God has been pleased to perform in this land by the instrumentality of the body to which we belong has naturally led to the erection of numerous places of worship. Religious societies have been formed of persons fearing God, and working righteousness; the ministry by which their conversion at first took place has been continued and enlarged by Him who alone can perpetuate a spiritual and true administration of his word; a disposition to hear the word of God, and to hallow his Sabbaths by acts of public devotion, has been greatly diffused in places where no such inclination existed; and a very great number of chapels have, in consequence, been rendered necessary. The exclamation of the prophet, 'What hath God wrought!' was often appropriately used by the great founder of our societies, when reflecting upon the progress of true religion in this land by his instrumentality, and by those who served him as sons in the Gospel. It may be used now with greater emphasis, and with stronger emotion. In by far the greater number of towns in this kingdom, large and commodious chapels have been erected, and are statedly filled with hearers; while innumerable villages, regularly visited by the preachers, are the seats of pious societies, bearing their constant testimony for God among their neighbours, in which the accommodations for worship are various,—dwelling houses and rooms chiefly,—but in many are chapels, of dimensions varying with the population, and the good effected. These are facts which call for no ordinary feelings of joy and gratitude, connected as they are with the cause of Christ, and the salvation of souls. In these religious societies and houses of prayer, how many have been trained and disciplined for heaven, and have already entered into the joy of their Lord, shall be known in the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ; but in all a 'truth according to godliness' is constantly preached, a spiritual worship is offered, and wanderers from peace and righteousness are constantly reclaiming from the error of their way. In many of them are conducted various institutions,—schools, benevolent societies, &c,—connected with the present and future interests of men; and thus religious truth and influence are preserved and extended in society. These are reflections equally cheering to piety, to philanthropy, and to patriotism: to piety, as the cause of true religion is upheld and promoted; to philanthropy,

as vice and misery are counteracted and assuaged; and to patriotism, as morality, industry, probity, and peace are the necessary results of this spread of true religion, and the inculcation of a holy doctrine in our native land.

"When the immense number of chapels belonging to the Methodist societies is considered, all of which have been in part raised by voluntary subscriptions, it is not easy to do justice to the liberality of a people who, notwithstanding such exertions, are far from affluent.—But with so much success to encourage them, and animated as they are, generally, with no ordinary degree of zeal for the extension of the cause of Christ, it is not surprising that in several instances this high and holy principle should have gone somewhat beyond the bounds of prudent expenditure in the erection of chapels, and involved some of the societies in embarrassments. This is the fact; and it has arisen from various causes. The usual method of erecting chapels among us, by raising part of the money by private subscription, and borrowing the remainder on the security of the trustees, the interest being left to be provided for by the pew rents and collections, has been favourable to the increase of chapels; but is a system which, with all its excellencies, requires calculations as to the future, which zeal is apt to overlook. In some cases, therefore, the chapels have been built too large; in others a want of judgment has led to an unanticipated expense; and in some the trustees have been misled, by builders and others, into expenditures, the extent of which they only became acquainted with when too late. Embarrassments have also arisen, in many cases, from causes over which human power has no control; from decay of trade, from diminution of population, from the death or removal of principal friends, or from that interruption in the growth of societies to which all religious bodies are in some degree subject. It has followed, therefore, that, though by the blessing of God upon the connection generally, the majority of its chapels are in prosperous, in easy, or in tolerable circumstances, a considerable number of them have been, for several years, in difficulties equally alarming to the trustees, and distressing to the societies and the preachers. To relief the trustees were entitled. The responsibilities they had entered into were not in the view of any private interest. They had been influenced only by their regard for the cause of God, to place themselves under the burden. The societies, as parts of the whole connection, were equally entitled to have that pressure relieved, as far as it had become excessive, which necessarily fell upon them in the form of extra subscriptions and collections, most generously offered, and persevered in with great constancy, without, however, in many instances, conquering or reducing the distress.

"Perhaps it is not easy to fix upon a case more truly worthy of Christian sympathy and kind assistance, than that of a chapel deeply involved in debt. The anxiety of trustees for themselves and families,—the burdens constantly laid upon societies and congregations, preventing often the increase of both, and thereby pressing down the growth of that natural aid which every chapel is supposed to contain within itself,—the perplexities and complaints in which ministers are involved, rendering the places of their labour irksome to them during their stay, and abating that satisfied and home feeling which is so essential to the

spiritual and vigorous discharge of their duties,—and, to crown all, the debates, and want of union and attention to the spiritual concerns of societies, which are produced among the leading friends and officers of a society so circumstanced: these evils will be amply and effectually removed by the maintenance of the chapel fund, and the relief it will afford. Opportunity will be given to infant societies to strengthen themselves; the confidence of trustees will be felt by congregations; union will be promoted; the ministry exercised with much greater comfort and success; and hope, the animating principle of exertion, be then a rational and salutary feeling, and spread an enlivening influence over ministers and trustees, over societies and congregations.

"To any exceptions which may be taken, as to the imprudence with which some chapels have been erected, and the expensiveness of others, we may say, that these objections lie not against the majority of the cases; and that where they do lie, there is the plea of the best intentions, though there have been mistakes of judgment. Let us not in these considerations forget that we are brethren; that the connection is but one; and if it has suffered in some instances by too sanguine a spirit of enterprise, in many more has the blessed work of our Redeemer among men been enlarged by it. If it has involved some few places in temporary difficulties, it has in great numbers created congregations which had never been otherwise collected, and given unnumbered souls to the Church and to the Saviour. In the cases of those of our chapels most embarrassed, there is much to expect. They are in large towns, in populous neighbourhoods, several of them have increasing congregations; and we doubt not but that many whose zeal outstepped a little the bounds of prudence, in the magnitude given to them, will live to forget the anxieties that circumstance has caused them, in the permanent good which will ultimately be effected.

"Very reasonable expectations of the increase of the chapel fund by legacies have been indulged. A number of benevolent friends have, at different times, left legacies to individual chapels; and it is hoped that a general fund, whose object is to keep open many places of worship which, but for such aid, must be disposed of, will be a sufficient motive to induce such pious remembrances and cares for the work of God on earth, by many who shall, from time to time, pass from the earthly dwellings of the Lord of hosts into his celestial temple."

Such were the generous sentiments entertained and promulgated by Mr. Watson in regard to the relief of embarrassed chapels. They are as applicable in the present day as they were when first committed to the press; and are happily now more widely diffused in the Methodist connection, and more fully carried into practical effect, than at any former period. Mr. Watson did not live to see the splendid arrangements now in operation for the removal of that hinderance to the work of God which arises from the pressure of pecuniary burdens upon places of worship; but no man was more deeply interested in this branch of Christian charity than he. When requested to lend the aid of his talents, by preaching at the anniversaries of embarrassed chapels, he generally yielded a willing compliance whenever his health and other engagements would allow; and he became a subscriber to the chapel fund as soon as it was instituted, and cheerfully continued his contributions to the end of his life.

CHAPTER XIII.

Missionary Report for the Year 1819—Letter to Mr. Garbutt—Mr. Watson visits Cornwall, accompanied by Mr. Bunting—Mission in Southern Africa—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in the Year 1820—Letter to Mr. Walton—Conference of 1820—Visit of Mr. Emory, from America—Pastoral Address to the Methodist Societies—Mr. Watson's Appointment a third Year to the London West Circuit—His Correspondence with the Missionaries—Letter to the Rev. William D. Goy.

While Mr. Watson was ready for every good work, it was to the missionary department that his attention was specially directed; and its regular advancement was to him a source of solid gratification.—At the conclusion of the year 1819 he sent forth into the world his fourth missionary report, the details of which possessed an increased interest; and the appeals at the conclusion were equal in eloquence and power to any of his former addresses to the subscribers. In the course of the year seventeen missionaries were sent abroad; seven of whom were appointed to the West Indies, one to Gibraltar, two to Western Africa, one to Southern Africa, five to Ceylon, and one to Bombay. The total number of missionaries actually employed under the direction of the conference was then one hundred and twenty; and the report stated that, to fill up the places of some missionaries who had returned home, and of others who had died in the work, to supply additional labourers where the cause was extending, and new stations to which pressing invitations had been given, the committee were about to send six missionaries to Asia, ten to the West Indies, two to Africa, and six to the British American colonies; making the whole number of Wesleyan missionaries, including three assistant missionaries in Ceylon, and one in Southern Africa, one hundred and forty-four. To meet so large an expenditure as these extended operations required, the sum of £22,913. 9*s.* 1½*d.* had been transmitted to the treasurers in the course of the year; exceeding the income of the society in any preceding year by £4,479. 18*s.* 6½*d.*

With respect to the state of the funds, and the obligations and prospects of the society, the report says, "For the support of so large a missionary establishment, persevering exertions are evidently necessary; and when it is considered that the extension of this great work has been engaged in by the committee in consequence of the most pressing solicitations from different parts of the earth, where opportunities have been providentially afforded to apply the great remedy of evangelical truth to the moral disorders of a wretched world, the committee cannot but depend with confidence upon the sympathy and piety of the public to enable them to meet an expenditure which has been induced by considerations so urgent, and which is enlarging beyond the receipts of the year, though so honourable to Christian benevolence, and by far the most productive year we have witnessed. Can we see the immortal souls of men in danger of eternal death, and not attempt their rescue? Can we contemplate regions where Christ is not named, and not attempt to make him known? Can we hear the voice of misery pleading for help, and refuse the boon? Animated by past success, and encouraged by the promises of Hea-

ven, it is not possible, as long as pity for men, love for Christ, and jealousy for the honours of God, are the energetic principles of a heart influenced by the everlasting love of Jesus our Redeemer, to refuse any sacrifice in order to afford the aid by which a cause so glorious, so connected with the happiness of the world, and the exaltation of the Church, can be promoted. The field widens before us; but, wherever it is cultivated, it yields abundant fruit, and will encourage the toil of future labour. The first fruits are reaped; the 'wave offering' is already presented before 'the Lord of the harvest,' in his sanctuary; but the full blessing is yet ungathered. 'The field is the world;' and already the zeal and love of Christians spread, in delightful anticipation, into all its length and breath. To the great and growing but encouraging work we are again summoned. It brings its present reward in the miseries it assuages or removes; in the elements of order and happiness it creates and combines; in the personal and social felicities it confers. But it runs on to a sublimer consummation. It is connected with purposes which the wisdom of God has arranged, which his goodness has nurtured and upheld, and which his power will ultimately execute to the height of the sublime idea: purposes, whose accomplishment supported the Saviour in his agony and bloody sweat, in his cross and passion; on which the eye of prophets, ranging through the scenes of the future, fixed with greatest intensity of observation; and the prospect of which has supported the hopes of martyrs and confessors, of ministers and missionaries, of the wise and good in all ages. 'And the end cometh.' The astonishing operations of God, both in providence, and in the administration of the kingdom of Christ, display the signs of the glory of the latter day. 'The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.'"

It is added, in reference to the increase of the contributions: "For this encouraging increase the society is indebted to the efforts of many individuals throughout the kingdom, who have laboured with most creditable perseverance to bring the cause of missions before the public, and to excite its liberality. Its interests have been very eminently promoted by the zeal of many excellent ladies, who, both in connection with general societies, and in ladies' associations, have consecrated their time and influence to this sacred cause. The funds have also received great assistance from several very active and efficient juvenile societies, where the energy of youth, and the sympathy of hearts early imbued with Christian philanthropy and piety, have united to produce and support a very successful activity in behalf of missions to the heathen. The committee offer their most cordial thanks to all those individuals and societies; and while they congratulate them on their past successes, they earnestly solicit from them the aid of their continued exertions. It has already been stated, that the missions are now so numerous, that the present contributions, though so much enlarged, will be unequal to their full support; and this consideration the committee trust will be felt as a powerful call to perseverance and activity. In numerous places missionary societies may yet be established with success; and in others they are capable of an extended operation. Where active collectors can be engaged,

experience has sufficiently proved that there are persons in every place who so love the Lord Jesus, and desire the extension of his kingdom, that when missionary intelligence is circulated among them, and their attention called to the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ among the heathen, they will, with readiness of spirit, make their regular contributions for purposes for which they daily pray, and which make an appeal so animated and efficient to those high and holy feelings which burn in the bosom of every true disciple of Him, who came 'to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

The following passage shows the spirit of fraternal affection which Mr. Watson, and those who were associated with him in the management of the Methodist missions, cherished toward their fellow labourers in the same cause of other denominations:—"In this great work they feel themselves in pleasing and harmonious co-operation with similar institutions, conducted by other religious denominations, in whose successes in their respective fields of labour, they greatly rejoice; and for whose future triumphs over the ignorance and wretchedness of the world they offer their unfeigned prayers. Happy for the world, happy for Christianity, when the time shall arrive when every Church of Christ on earth shall give its full energy to the accomplishment of the gracious purposes of the Saviour toward the fallen race whom he has redeemed with his most precious blood; and when, like the Churches of primitive times, 'walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost,' they shall be 'multiplied' by the conversion of the heathen of every nation under heaven to the love and worship of Jesus Christ, who is 'over all, God blessed for ever.'"

While Mr. Watson thus availed himself of the publication of the annual missionary report to plead the cause of the heathen world, he was equally ready to advocate the same cause both from the pulpit and the platform; and the commencement of the year 1820 found him making extensive arrangements for services of this description. The following letter contains some notices of his plans. It was an answer to an invitation from his friends in Hull, who wished to be favoured with his assistance at their missionary anniversary; and was addressed

To Mr. Robert Garbutt.

Mission House, Feb. 10th, 1820.

My Dear Friend,—Mr. Bunting and I are going through Cornwall this month, and through Norfolk in April, and shall not, therefore, take a northern tour. We are, however, making arrangements for Mr. Harvard to attend several of the northern meetings; and you will be soon written to for the purpose of knowing whether you wish your meeting to be connected with the rest of the *chain*. In that case he will visit you; and you may get some neighbouring preachers to meet him.

I thank you for your kind invitation; and had I been coming near, nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to have seen my ever-respected and never-to-be-forgotten friends in Hull, whom I never think of without the warmest affection.

Wishing you all prosperity, but especially the blessing of the Lord, which only "maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow," with "grace, mercy, and peace," I am, my dear friend,

Yours, as ever, truly.

The result of the journey into Cornwall, here mentioned by Mr. Watson, is stated in a letter written by the Rev. Richard Treffry, dated Truro, March 10th, 1820; in which it is said, "In the course of the last month, the Rev. Messrs. Bunting and Watson, two of the general secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, paid a visit to Cornwall; where, beside preaching in the principal places, in the different circuits of that district, they held public meetings in Penzance, Camborne, Helston, Falmouth, and Truro. Never was there a greater interest excited among the religious part of the inhabitants of that county, than on these occasions; and though the meetings were continued from five to six hours, and the chapels uncommonly crowded, yet the people gladly continued to the end. Colonel Sandys, who favoured the meetings with his presence, and ably filled the chair, gave affecting details of the superstitions of India, of which he had been an eye witness; and the Rev. William Davies, who has been a missionary to Sierra Leone, arrested the attention of the people in an unusual manner with lively descriptions of the superstitions of Africa, and the dark and degraded state of its wretched inhabitants. Beside the public collections, which were more liberal than were ever remembered in Cornwall, we confidently expect, from the more regular organization of an auxiliary society for that district, and branch societies for the several circuits, that the missionary fund will receive considerable assistance." Messrs. Bunting and Watson expressed themselves as highly gratified with their Cornish tour; and especially with the co-operation of Colonel Sandys, Joseph Carne, Esq., and the Rev. Messrs. Treffry, Truscott, Davies, and the other preachers. The Cornish Methodists exemplified the motto of their county; and came forward, "one and all," to assist in sending the Gospel to the heathen.

At this time the Wesleyan mission in Southern Africa began to assume an aspect and character of superior interest. A few years before, Mr. Barnabas Shaw had been sent to Cape-Town; but not being allowed to exercise his ministry there, he had penetrated into the interior of the country, carrying the truth of God to the savage tribes, accompanied by his excellent wife, who even rivalled her husband in zeal, self denial, and enterprise. Messrs. Edward Edwards and James Archbell had been sent to his assistance in Little Namacqualand; and Jacob Links, an intelligent converted Hottentot, had been raised up, as the fruit of missionary exertion, and exercised an efficient native ministry. He was afterward basely murdered, with his fellow traveller, Mr. Threlfall, when they were on their way to explore new fields of missionary labour.

Early in the year 1820 Mr. William Shaw embarked for that colony, under the direct sanction of his majesty's government. A considerable number of emigrants were about to form a settlement in a tract of country bordering upon the Kaffer tribes; and the government proposed to advance the sum of £75 per annum, for the support of a minister in connection with a given number of settlers, leaving it to the parties themselves to choose their own spiritual guide. Among the emigrants were several Methodist families, sufficiently numerous to entitle them to the allowance in question. They therefore applied to the committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society for a suitable minister; and Mr. William Shaw was appointed, with the understanding, that if he should

at any future time be removed to another station, his place should be supplied by the committee. Such was the state of things when Mr. Watson published the following account in the Missionary Notices for February, 1820:—"Mr. and Mrs. Shaw are only waiting the breaking up of the ice in the river, to proceed with the colonists who are to settle not far from Algoa Bay. The whole number of settlers from different parts, now on their voyage, or about to proceed to this settlement, is probably more than three thousand. The introduction of so great a number of professed Christians, comprising many who we trust are really so, and who will have the ordinances of religion immediately established among them, into a heathen land, we cannot but consider as one of those circumstances which Providence in the present day is so obviously overruling, for the purpose of extending the kingdom of Christ in the world. The colony will be in the immediate neighbourhood of the Kaffers, whose wild habits, if these colonists conduct themselves with justice and kindness in their intercourse with them, will be rapidly ameliorated. The spectacle of civilized life, and the benefits arising from industry and cultivation at the very door of these tribes, will give encouragement to those of their chiefs who have been best disposed to change the habits of their people, to renew the attempt; and the zeal of many of the colonists, we doubt not, will induce them to embrace every opportunity to communicate to such of the natives as come within their reach, the knowledge of the Gospel. It is a very hopeful circumstance, connected with the probable extension which may be given to Christianity by the establishment of these colonies, that many of the persons going out are not only of a religious character, but in this country have been members of missionary societies, and accustomed to hear stated from the pulpit, and in public meetings, the obligations of Christians to promote the conversion of the heathen. With these views and impressions many of them will go out; and the colonies, as they rise, will furnish both means and instruments for taking their proper share in this great work. Colonists in former times have too frequently commenced with a contempt for the savage tribes in whose neighbourhood they have been settled, which has led, not merely to the neglect of their instruction, but to acts of injury and violence. We trust that sentiments of love and pity for the heathen are felt by many of the colonists now going to South Africa; that they will be taught to their children; and that, from their settlements, the light and influence of Christianity may spread to many of the tribes who lie upon their borders. Mr. William Shaw has special instructions to avail himself of every opportunity which may offer for this purpose; and should favourable circumstances occur, the mission in that part of South Africa will be reinforced. From the Namacqua country our accounts are very interesting. Mr. Shaw and Mr. Edwards are at Lilly Fountain; Mr. and Mrs. Archbell are gone to Reed Fonteine, a new settlement, about two days' journey distant from the former, where they have collected about one hundred natives; among whom, with the religion of Christ, the useful arts will be introduced. Mr. Shaw intended shortly to proceed beyond the Orange River, for the purpose of forming a third settlement, having been encouraged by a correspondence with Mr. Schmelen on the subject, and by conversation with Hottentots from that quarter. Mr. Shaw is

also now hopeful as to the probability of obtaining access for a missionary to the negro slaves of the colony. The committee, under all these circumstances, have resolved to appoint an additional missionary for South Africa, who is to proceed to Namacqualand, that by his assistance Mr. Shaw may be able to proceed to the Orange River; or attempt to effect an opening to the colonial slaves, and in any other way endeavour to extend the kingdom of God in this too long neglected part of the globe. Surely the time of the efficient visitation of the dark and degraded continent of Africa is come. The work, commenced on the south and west, will, if persevered in, and supported by the prayers and liberalities of the Christian world, gradually spread northward and eastward, until 'Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God.'"

This became a favourite mission with Mr. Watson; and he lived till his anticipations concerning it, as they are here expressed, were realized to a great extent. On the 22d of March Mr. and Mrs. Kay left London for Gravesend, to embark for Little Namacqualand, where a mission had been so auspiciously commenced. Before their departure, Mr. Watson said, with a feeling never to be forgotten, "Mr. Kay, were I as young as you, Africa should be the field of my choice." Having fulfilled his term of service, Mr. Kay has returned to England, and has recently published a work replete with curious and interesting information, on the rise and progress of the settlement just mentioned, the habits and manners of the Kaffers, and the progress of religion and civilization among that once barbarous and savage people. It is one of the most instructive missionary publications the age has produced; and shows in a very striking light the influence of Christianity in giving a right direction to infant colonies, and in raising the most degraded tribes to the enjoyments of civilized life, and the hopes of a blessed immortality.

The annual meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society was held in the City-Road chapel on the first of May; Mr. Butterworth was in the chair; and the attendance, as usual, very great. A remarkably fine and hallowed tone was given to this meeting by one of the preparatory sermons, preached by the Rev. William Ward, one of the Baptist missionaries from Serampore, on the necessity of Divine influence in order to the success of missionary operations. In acknowledging the vote of thanks to the secretaries, which the meeting adopted, Mr. Watson said that he had lately had the pleasure of witnessing other meetings, some as large as that before him, animated by the same spirit of benevolence toward the heathen world, and desirous of extending the victories of the Redeemer. This was encouraging; for why did God diffuse this spirit through the land, if he had not some mighty work to perform? And if this feeling be of God, we may safely argue that it is the intention of the Lord to spread the knowledge of his truth, and speedily to bring the nations of the earth into his fold. He viewed the kind assistance rendered by ministers of different denominations as very encouraging. This approximation of Christians to each other was a most hopeful circumstance; and would give to Christianity a very decided superiority in the world. Heathens themselves must be constrained to acknowledge, when the Gospel is sent to them, "This is the result of the love of

God, which is so conspicuous in all the meetings of the Christians." It was one effect of the Bible society, that it spread a common ground upon which all might meet without compromising their respective sentiments. Still there remained a vacancy; for each society carried on its missionary meetings with its own ministers. But why could not the missionary platform be the common ground? It had been said that when they met in the Bible society, there was no sacrificing of principle; and he would be glad to know what principle they sacrificed there that day. Was not their common Christianity one grand and public benefit? If they were sincere, they would be glad of all the help they could get; and on what individual soever they saw the spirit of their Master descend, they would heartily wish the blessing of the Lord to rest upon him. Mr. Watson felt much interested in every society. The excellent preacher, Dr. Adam Clarke, who preached to them on Friday morning, had told the congregation, that he should hate his scoundrel heart if he did not love all mankind. "Why, sir," said Mr. Watson, "I, too, should hate my heart,—and I have no objection to use the expression in full, and to say, my *scoundrel* heart, —if I did not wish well to all our sister missionary institutions.— They are all employed in endeavouring to communicate to the world the benefits of Christianity. And shall we not love them, and admire their efforts?" He then took a view of the different missionary operations throughout the world, and especially of the board of missions in America. "The American Christians," said he, "are coming forward in a most astonishing manner; they make the most surprising calculations; their designs are gigantic and overwhelming.* There is a period pointed out in prophecy, when the Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh; and I doubt not that the conversion of the world will be both rapid and glorious."

Mr. Watson concluded by moving the following important resolution:—"That to the Rev. William Ward, of Serampore, this meeting returns its thanks for the sermon preached before the society on Thursday evening last, in which he strikingly evinced the absolute necessity of Divine influence in order to the success of missions, and the duty of united and fervent prayers to God in that behalf; and that it be most earnestly recommended to all the members and friends of this society, and of its auxiliaries and branches, in every part of the kingdom, to be more than ever abundant in supplications for the special blessing of Heaven, and the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit, on missionaries themselves, and on the heathen world in which they labour."

In the course of this most interesting meeting Richard Rothwell, Esq., alderman and sheriff of London, appeared on the platform with his insignia of office. He had that morning been attending the execution of some wretched culprits, who confessed that they had been led into a career of crime by reading the infidel writings of Paine, and that the principles which they had been taught by that bad and vain man had brought them to their ignominious end. The scenes which were that day presented to the view of the alderman formed a perfect and strik-

* Referring to a very stirring pamphlet then just published in America, entitled, "The Claims of Eight Hundred Millions of Heathens;" and proposing the means of their conversion.

ing contrast. In one place he saw infidelity plunging its miserable victims into vice and infamy; and in the other, he saw a vast assembly of Christian people, under the influence of the most expansive benevolence, concerting plans for spreading truth and purity and happiness all over the world, and listening with delighted attention to the cheering instances of past success which the different speakers brought before them. The effect upon the alderman's mind was very powerful; and he expressed his most cordial approbation of the society, whose proceedings he said he had watched for many years.

A few weeks after this missionary anniversary was held, Mr. Watson addressed the following pious and affectionate letter to his friend Mr. Walton, then in great trouble because of domestic afflictions:—

To Mr. William Walton, of Wakefield.

London, June 5th, 1820.

My Dear Sir,—I should have written before, but that I had an expectation of being called into Leicestershire on some private business, when I fully intended to visit Wakefield, in order to sympathize with you in the troubles in which you have lately been involved. I now find that I cannot have that opportunity; for though I am going to Nottingham next week, to the missionary meeting, that meeting is connected with some others on my way back, so that I cannot possibly get farther north. If it be possible, I will call upon you in returning from the conference.

You have had a large share of trouble; but it is your mercy that you know where your help lies; and that you have proved the power and grace of Jesus, our Saviour, to comfort all who are in affliction.—What a lesson is all this on the vanity of earth, and all it contains! How necessary it is to possess more than creature comforts, which perish in the using! Let us thank God that the best blessings are secured to us by a title which can never be shaken; by the faithful word of Him who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever!"

I indulged the hope when I last left your peaceful habitation, that you had escaped all the storms of life, and were anchored in a quiet haven, until the signal should be given for your return to your Father's house above; but there is mercy in every appointment, though we cannot always see it; and "all things work together for good to them that love God;" and, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." On these promises may your faith steadily repose! There is a harbour, into which no wave of trouble shall roll after us; and for that may we all stand prepared, that so an entrance may be ministered to us abundantly into its everlasting quietness and rest.

Present my most cordial and affectionate remembrance to Miss Walton, and Miss Ann. There is no family I know to whom my attachment is so cordial; and, believe me, though I have not seen you so long, it is unabated. I shall not cease to offer up my poor prayers for you all, that every good may attend you.

P. S. I shall be happy to hear from you. You can direct for me at the Methodist chapel, Nottingham, where I shall be, God willing, next Sunday and Monday; or, if you write after that time, to the mission house, where I am every day.

The conference of 1820 was held in Liverpool, at the latter end of July, and the beginning of August; and many circumstances concurred to render it a season of peculiar interest. The political agitations in the manufacturing districts were carried on, by desperate men, with undiminished violence; the commercial interests of the country were still in a state of great depression; the privations of the poor were severe and widely extended; and the spirit of disaffection to the government was fierce and determined, so as in many places to endanger the public tranquillity. These things operated very injuriously upon the cause of religion; and the result was, a decrease in the Methodist societies in Great Britain of considerably more than four thousand members. When persons professing Christian godliness so far enter into temptation as not to be "afraid to speak evil of dignities," ascribe to their rulers the corrective visitations of Providence, and surrender themselves to a spirit of murmuring and discontent, the Methodist discipline and order, and especially the weekly meetings for prayer and religious conversation, are felt to be a serious grievance; and the parties generally retire from a society which lays their passions and tongues under restraint, and then seek more congenial companions among the disciples of infidelity and democracy. This serious defalcation in the societies produced great searchings of heart in the conference; considerable time was occupied in conversation on the subject; and the result was, a determination on the part of the preachers to pay increased attention to their own personal piety, and to the pastoral care of the people of their charge, to maintain the spirit of primitive simplicity and faithfulness in their public ministrations, and to extend the work of God in neglected neighbourhoods.

At this conference the Rev. John Emory was present, as the representative of the general conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America; and the details which he gave respecting the progress of the work of God in that continent was cheering in the highest degree. A mutual interchange of representatives between the two connections was agreed upon, and the bands of reciprocal affection were strengthened. Mr. Emory was received in a manner the most cordial and friendly; and his preaching, conversation, and Christian spirit and manners, excited a lively interest. Mr. Watson was requested to draw up an answer to the address of the general superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which had been brought by Mr. Emory. In this document, which the British conference adopted, he says, speaking of their representative, "In him we have recognized the purity of your doctrine, and the fervour and simplicity of your piety. We have received him 'not as a stranger,' but 'as a brother beloved.' Our hearts are as his heart; and it will be remembered as one of the most pleasing circumstances connected with the conference held in this town, that our personal intercourse with you was here restored, and that this work of love was committed to so able and excellent a brother, whose public ministrations, and addresses in our conference, have been equally gratifying and instructive to us and to our people.

"From the statements made by Mr. Emory, as to the progress of the work of God in the United States, we have received the greatest satisfaction. We offered our united thanksgivings to God, that the doctrines of primitive Methodism, the preaching of which God has so

eminently owned in the salvation of men, and the edification of believers, are not only continued among you in their purity, but have been so widely extended by your great and persevering efforts, and that the same holy discipline, in all its essential parts, continues wherever you form societies, to guard and confirm the work which God has made to prosper in your hands.

"You will see that we have had to rejoice with you in the great extension of the work of God into the various parts of the British empire; and that the institutions of Methodism, which we have proved to be so well adapted to promote and preserve true religion, are known and valued in every quarter of the globe. May we, with you, be the honoured instruments of turning the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, in every place, and of hastening the universal kingdom of our Lord."

At the request of the conference Mr. Watson also wrote the annual pastoral address to the societies. The occasion was important, and the principles and admonitions which he embodied in this composition possess a more than ordinary value. The following paragraphs are selected as a specimen, and as illustrating the spirit and views of the writer:—"The religious state of our societies in Great Britain has been favourably reported of by the brethren; though we lament to state that a decrease in our numbers has occurred. We are satisfied, however, that such is the excellence of our discipline, and that, in general, it is so faithfully enforced, that few persons can find admission among us, who are not sincerely desirous to make their calling and election sure; and that still fewer will long remain who have in their hearts forsaken the law of their God. Under the painful circumstance of some decline in our numbers, we derive satisfaction from the confidence we have, that, as a body, our people are 'walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.'

"We cannot, however, but deeply regret, that, in proportion to the number of ministers employed, and the various means of grace which it is the privilege of our societies and congregations to enjoy, our success has, during the year, been so limited; and that we have not had to rejoice, as usual, in a multitude being added to the Lord.

"Many circumstances, we are aware, have of late occurred in our country, which have had an unhappy effect in counteracting the influence of religion upon society, and in obstructing the operation of the best-adapted means of turning the thoughts of men to serious and eternal things. Commercial embarrassment, and consequent distress, have largely prevailed, and especially in those districts where usually we have had the greatest success in turning many to righteousness.—Unhappily, that distress has not produced general humiliation before God, and a livelier impression of the necessity and supreme importance of those blessings which, by the mercy of God, are exempted from the mutations of the world, and which it can neither give nor take away. Political agitations have spread through the land; the correcting hand of a just and holy God has not been acknowledged; and, too frequently, every attempt to improve the chastisements of Heaven to moral uses has been the object of the scorner's scoff. The attention of the public has been engaged by a succession of inquietudes, and irritated by the strife of parties. Thus, where direct opposition to the religion of

Christ has not been produced, by an avowed infidelity, a moral deadness to Divine things has been largely diffused. The Sabbath, and the ordinances of the house of God, have been more than commonly neglected by those whom custom, if not religious feeling, used formerly to lead into his temples; and where the word of God has been heard, it has often found the heart too much occupied with earthly cares, or stirred up by earthly passions, so to receive the word of God as to bring forth fruit unto perfection. For these reasons, the last year may be considered as one of great spiritual dearth in many parts of the nation; and perhaps those special effusions of the Holy Spirit, by which such hinderances to the progress of true religion are commonly removed, have been withheld, both to produce in us a livelier sense of their necessity, and that the effects of evil principles upon the best interests of individual man, and on society, might be made more manifest; in order to call forth more earnest prayers from the faithful, and incite them to 'labours more abundant.'

"While deploring the small success of our ministry in the past year, we have not failed to examine our own hearts, lest any decay in the fervour of our own piety, lest any deficiency of zealous service in the cause of our great Master, should have obstructed the work and blessing of God. To similar searchings of heart, and to the most serious review of every past neglect and failure, we now affectionately and earnestly call you. Let us 'stir up the gift that is within us,' and be more strictly 'blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,' that we may 'shine as the lights of the world, holding forth the word of life.' The times and the seasons more especially call us to be decided in our religious character; fruitful in counsel, and in good works; exemplary in family worship, and attendance on the public means of grace; pitiful to deluded and strayed souls; and careful not to be 'conformed to the world.' Thus a holier and more efficacious influence will be exerted upon our families, our brethren in Christ, and upon our beloved country, 'in whose peace we have peace,' and to whose moral improvement and salvation our system was from the first devoted by our venerable founder. Let the abounding of iniquity, therefore, excite within us a nobler spirit of Christian enterprise; and the numerous agencies of evil, which are now employed to destroy, stir us up to urge into more energetic action the saving institutions of the Gospel of Christ. Let us, dear brethren, 'renew our strength by waiting upon God,' and redouble our efforts to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim every wanderer, to make 'manifest in every place the savour of the knowledge of Christ;' and by patience of instruction and labour extend that work in which we are engaged, and have hitherto, by the Divine blessing, been so successful. But never may we forget, that as all success depends upon God, we can only obtain it as we are 'instant in prayer,' and deeply experienced in personal holiness. It is a truth which we cannot too frequently impress upon our own hearts, and upon you, that the recovery of souls, and the edification of the Churches, are the sole and glorious work of the ETERNAL SPIRIT. Let us, then, more earnestly and perseveringly supplicate the effusion of his influence upon our congregations and our country, 'that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified;' let us joyfully and exclusively depend upon his aid

in every act of religious duty; and while in the exercise of our humble trust we acknowledge God, he will not fail to regard our prayers, and vouchsafe the fulness of his blessing.

"The reports laid before us, as to the state and prospects of the work of God in our foreign missions, by the missionary committee, afford us the highest satisfaction. In every place prospects of great usefulness present themselves, and in many there has been a great increase in the societies. The blessings of religion are rapidly diffusing themselves through the negro population of the West India colonies; and in many entirely heathen parts of the world, by translations, by schools, and by other labours of our brethren, the light of the knowledge of Christ is breaking through the gloom of ages, turning the attention and hearts of men to the 'only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.' Thus, as a body, we are taking a large share in the true vocation of the general Church of Christ, the extension of the name and kingdom of our Lord to the ends of the earth. For this great service a sufficient number of qualified labourers have been raised up, and sent into the fields white unto the harvest; and the funds for their support have been most liberally supplied by your charity, and the kindness of the friends of missions in general. In these exertions of your zeal and piety we greatly rejoice; they have received the seal of the sanction and blessing of the Lord of the Churches. A success unprecedented in the history of modern missions has been vouchsafed to the ministry of our brethren in various scenes of their foreign labour; and the present state and enlarging prospects of our missions generally may be considered as the voice of our God, inviting us to new efforts and triumphs, and saying, 'Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as *ye know* that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

"The conference has felt peculiar satisfaction in receiving a representative from the General American Conference, after a suspension of personal communication for some years. Circumstances, and not any diminution of Christian love, had interrupted this grateful interchange of brotherly affection and mutual esteem. The renewal of it by the deputation of our excellent and beloved brother Emory has given us great joy. Through him we have received the assurances of that regard which is felt by our brethren of the United States, toward the Methodists of Great Britain, by whom that work which now diffuses light and life through the vast space of that great and rising country was first commenced; and of their desire that a regular intercourse by deputation from each conference should be established. All the expressions of kindness thus communicated to us by brother Emory, in the name and on the behalf of the General American Conference, have been echoed back by the sympathies of our hearts. We could not hear his statements, as to the state and progress of the common work in the United States of America, without being deeply affected with gratitude to God, and admiration of the ardour and enterprise of our brethren there in the cause of Christ. Their unwearied labours have not only, by the Divine blessing, raised up large and flourishing societies in the principal cities and towns of the Union; but they have erected the altars of God in the distant wilderness, and connected the insulated settlements of men with the hopes, the joys, and the worship

of the universal Church. As the tide of population has extended itself over that vast country, they have followed it, embracing every opportunity to reach, and submitting to great difficulties and privations to save souls. To these labours they were long animated by the noble example of the venerable Asbury, a man of apostolic labours, whose spirit of patient zeal and self-denying piety has abundantly descended upon the excellent general superintendents, who now direct those vast means which exist in a state of increasing activity in the American continent, for the extension of the hallowing influence of true religion through the growing population of the Anglo-American empire. An efficient religious system, operating wide as that extensive country, has been created, which already has begun to extend itself beyond its bounds, ample as they are, to the pagan Indians on its borders, and promises, under Divine Providence, to disperse the rays of truth to the still benighted parts of that great continent, on the north, the west, and the south; to parts where civilization is silently laying the foundation of future states, but now involved in superstition, or the bewildering darkness of paganism and idolatry. To these great successes, and still greater prospects, our hearts have been delightfully directed by the kind visit of our beloved brother; and with invigorated affection we have embraced our distant brethren, one with us in doctrine, one in the object of their labours, and one in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"As a body, we do not exist for the purpose of party. Our aim has been higher: and if ever it ought to fix itself with firmness upon elevated purposes, it is at the present moment. Large and extensive fields of usefulness lie around us; and if we keep our calling constantly in mind, if we live under the deep impression of the spiritual and moral dangers of our country, and of the worth of souls, we shall not fail to unite with our efforts to make known the name of Christ to pagans abroad, exertions more comprehensive and ardent for the diffusion of religious light and influence at home. We ourselves would anew impress upon our minds the admonition of our venerable founder, 'You have nothing to do but to save souls;' and in the name of our Lord we call for your awakened and renewed co-operation. We have most solemnly given up ourselves again to this, the only true object of the Christian ministry. Let us carry along with us your heightened fervour, that by common efforts in every place, our societies may be built up in faith, and established in holiness, and the work extended into every neighbourhood, to which a spirit like that of our great Master, who came to 'seek' that he might save, can obtain access.

"With those of our dear people who still suffer in the distresses of our country, we deeply sympathize. We weep with those that weep; and we know the tears which many of you have shed, and the anxieties which have filled your hearts. We trust that these afflictive dispensations to the nation are but temporary; and that the prayers which are constantly offered to Him who 'ruleth among the nations' will finally prevail in behalf of the poor. To Him you have looked, and found support in the present consolations and the future hopes of Christianity. May your minds be still sustained upon the immovable rock of the Divine promises! Amidst every earthly change your God and Saviour is eternally the same; the sure confidence of all who flee to him for refuge, 'a very present help in trouble.' 'He knoweth how

to deliver the godly out of temptation,' and to make a temporary trial the means of spiritual and everlasting good.

"We have thought it our duty, as representing so great a number of his majesty's subjects, to prepare an address to our sovereign, on his accession to the throne of these realms. This was unanimously voted on the first day of our meeting; and while we thus announce to you that we have complied with what you, from your known loyalty, and regard to the institutions of the country, and to the illustrious house of Brunswick, expected from us as your ministers and representatives, in expressing to his present majesty our joy at his accession, and our fervent prayers for the prosperity of his reign, we cannot but record our grateful and affectionate remembrance of the name and virtues of our late venerable sovereign, GEORGE THE THIRD; under whose long-continued reign our religious liberties were held so sacred, and under whose administration we never failed to obtain protection and redress, both for ourselves and our societies abroad. May the throne of his successor be established in righteousness! May there be peace and truth in his day!

"'And now, brethren, we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.' After having largely and seriously conferred on those subjects in which we have with you a common concern and interest, we are about to separate, and re-commence our labours among you in our several circuits. We are reminded, by the close of another of our annual assemblies, in which we have renewed our mutual affection, that those tender and intimate bonds which unite us to you and to each other, and which, we trust, will acquire increasing strength as long as we remain on earth, must, ere long, be broken. Every year records on our minutes the death of many of our fellow labourers, and your faithful pastors. The peaceful scenes of the Church, and of a religious society, where we so often mingle in holy friendships, and feel how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, must soon close upon us and you. Let our conversation be in heaven. Let us imbibe more of the spirit of those above, the conquerors before the throne, as we approach their society, and view their glories in a perspective less dark and distant. Let us follow them as they followed Christ. So shall our Lord count us worthy to stand in his presence, and to minister in his sanctuary the offerings of exalted praise, eternal love, and celestial service. So shall we join those venerable names on whose labours we have entered, and the fruits of whose toils and sufferings we so largely enjoy, and renew that union with each other which now conveys to our hearts a delight so rich and supporting, in that kingdom of our Lord, where it shall for ever remain, unalloyed by human change and human frailty."

At this conference Mr. Watson was returned a third year to the London west circuit, with the three excellent colleagues who, during the two former years, had been his fellow labourers. He was also continued in his office as secretary to the missionary society, with his esteemed friends the Rev. Messrs. Bunting and Joseph Taylor. The duties of the secretaryship were onerous, and involved considerable responsibility; but his mental resources were equal to every emergency, and he never shrunk from his share of honourable and pious labour.

The task of corresponding with the missionaries was not the least important duty which devolved upon him. Some of the missionaries were young men, and needed instruction; others were placed in circumstances of great and pressing difficulty, and applied for advice. Occasionally a missionary was prodigal of life, especially in an unhealthy climate, and it was requisite to admonish him to moderate his labours, that he might not offer to God murder for sacrifice. In some of the stations much preparatory work was necessary. The missionary laboured from year to year, and after all saw little fruit. He was therefore in danger of growing weary and faint in his mind; and his case called for affectionate sympathy and encouragement. It is difficult for people who enjoy all the advantages of the Sabbath, of the ministry of the word, of the sacraments, and of Christian fellowship, to form a just conception of the trying situation of a missionary whose lot is cast in a purely heathen country, where the objects and examples daily presented to his view are only calculated to deaden every spiritual affection, to blunt the feelings of conscience, and familiarize the mind with scenes of vice and crime; while there is an absence of all the helps and stimulants to piety and devotion. And yet, if the men who are thus circumstanced suffer their love to wax cold, their hatred of idolatry and sin to abate, and their zeal to languish and decay, they are ill qualified for the work in which they are employed. Mr. Watson's correspondence with the missionaries was distinguished by great piety, affection, and fidelity; admirably adapted to "stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance," and excite them to the cultivation of their talents, and to maintain the spirit of Christian godliness. A letter addressed to the Rev. William D. Goy, then stationed in the island of Grenada, in the West Indies, may serve as a specimen. Mr. Goy says, "I have at different times witnessed Mr. Watson's kindness toward the missionaries, and his still deeper interest in the mission work. I am satisfied that he was, in his capacity of mission secretary, a faithful servant of the public; and that he entertained toward the missionaries the most affectionate feeling." Mr. Goy had now been labouring three years in the principal town of that colony; some of the influential planters had applied to the committee for an extension of the mission to the eastern side of the island, where there was the largest population of negro slaves; and Mr. Goy was appointed to occupy this new station, and to communicate Christian instruction to a people who previously had no knowledge of Christianity.

To the Rev. William D. Goy.

London, Sept. 27th, 1820.

My Dear Brother,—We are happy to hear that so good a prospect presents itself to your labours in that part of the island in which you are now stationed. Much depends upon your success in improving the moral condition of the slaves by careful instruction; for the estates, so improved by the Divine blessing, may then be appealed to, as proofs of the good effects of religious care; and as you have the planters on your side, you have the best opportunity for bringing into operation the means which have always proved more or less effectual. Let it be your noble ambition to present to the island a body of well-instructed and orderly negroes.

We approve both of your plan of careful and effectual catechisation, and of giving sufficient time to each estate. Nothing, we are persuaded, goes so directly to promote the end we all propose as the former; for without it sermons have but a very partial effect; and those negroes who become really religious are often, for want of better instruction in the principles of religion, very unsteady.

It is also of equal importance that, while a missionary most conscientiously fills up his time, and uses all diligence, he should not undertake more than he can effectually perform. When the people on an estate are well catechised, they will be prepared for preaching; and he may then give more time to the catechising of the people of another.

You know something of the system of monitors in our schools at home; and I would suggest, whether you could not use the older children, who have been well taught, to instruct the younger, under your direction; and thus save yourself a little labour. They would prepare them for you, and sooner perhaps fit them for your public catechising, when, no doubt, you make use of the catechism as a sort of text book, on which to found your remarks and exhortations. You who know the circumstances are, however, the best judge.

Could not the children also learn some of Dr. Watts's and Mr. Wesley's hymns for children? and if taught to sing, they would be the more interested. But probably you have adopted this also.

My dear brother, let us live near to God, and labour as those who see the end approaching. "Occupy till I come," was the injunction of our Lord. God grant that when he cometh we may be found so doing!

Present my compliments to Mr. Hewitson,* whom I saw once or twice at the mission office, in London.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Southey's "Life of Wesley"—Brief View of Mr. Wesley's Doctrine—Mr. Southey's defective Views of Religion—Mr. Watson publishes "Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley"—Extracts from that Work—Death of the Rev. Joseph Benson—Missionary Report for the Year 1820—New South Wales—New-Zealand—The West Indies—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in 1821—The Rev. William Ward—Remarks on Missionary Meetings—Letter to Mr. Walton.

Mr. Watson was never unemployed, and he was never employed in a trifling manner. There was an energy and vigour in his mind which seemed to bid defiance to every obstacle; and hence the extent of his labours is almost incredible, considering the weakness of his constitution, and the frequent interruption of his studies by ill health. In the autumn of 1820 he appeared as the opponent of one of the most distinguished literary men of the age. "The Life of Wesley, and the Rise and Progress of Methodism, by Robert Southey, Esq., Poet Laureate," in two large volumes, was published in the early part of the

* This gentleman was the planter on whose premises Mr. Goy then resided.

year. In this work the theological and disciplinary principles of Methodism, and the character of its founder were subjects of animadversion; and a defence of both was deemed necessary. The Wesleyan book committee, acting in behalf of the conference, requested Mr. Watson to undertake this task; a request which was repeated by the conference, in whose minutes the following resolution was inserted:— "The conference approve of the request of the book committee to Mr. Watson, to prepare a review of the Life of the Rev. John Wesley, which has been recently published by Mr. Southey; and the book committee are directed to circulate that review, when printed, as extensively as possible." Mr. Watson had a strong conviction of the mischievous tendency of the work in question; and at the solicitation of his brethren, he undertook the defence of Mr. Wesley, and of his religious system, against their learned and eloquent assailant.

Mr. Southey's work had been long expected; and was less severe in its censures upon Mr. Wesley and the Methodists than was anticipated, considering the determined opposition to them which the Quarterly Review had assumed; a periodical with which the author was known to be intimately connected. In collecting materials for the biography of Mr. Wesley, the poet laureate explored every accessible source of information; he does justice to Mr. Wesley's great abilities, to his attainments as a scholar, and his fine temper as a man and a controversialist; he acknowledges the extensive moral good effected by Mr. Wesley's instrumentality; and the narrative, which is beautifully written, is enlivened by anecdotes, and sketches of contemporary characters, so as to be rendered highly entertaining, and invite the perusal of all classes of people; especially as an air of philosophy and candour is thrown over the whole. The praise given to Mr. Wesley is occasionally very high, and was likely to gratify his friends; and the censures passed upon him are sufficiently harsh to meet the prejudices of the generality of his enemies. The work professes strong attachment to the established Church; and the partial separation of the Methodists from her pale is alternately made a matter of regret and vituperation. Several of the Methodists thought that the work, as a whole, was honourable to Mr. Wesley; that it would elevate his character in the public estimation; and therefore rather serve than injure the cause in which they were embarked. It was the only biography of Mr. Wesley that had then appeared which does full justice to his talents and scholarship. In the whole of these views Mr. Watson could not acquiesce. That the work might accidentally serve the cause of true religion, he was not inclined to deny; but he thought its direct tendency to be very injurious. Individuals, by reading it, might be favourably impressed with the general character of Mr. Wesley, and thus be led to peruse his own writings, and judge for themselves concerning his religious views, and in this way the work might do good; but Mr. Watson saw that, however Mr. Wesley might be occasionally held up to admiration and respect, the religion which it was the business of that great man's life to propagate was denied and ridiculed by his biographer. All that Mr. Wesley deemed vital and saving in Christianity, Mr. Southey coolly explains away upon philosophical principles.

The religion inculcated by Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors is thus stated by himself, at the beginning of his "Earnest Appeal to Men of

Reason and Religion :"—"We see, (and who does not ?) the numberless follies and miseries of our fellow creatures. We see on every side either men of no religion at all, or men of a lifeless, formal religion. We are grieved at the sight, and should greatly rejoice, if by any means we might convince some that there is a better religion to be attained,—a religion worthy of God that gave it. And this we conceive to be no other than love; the love of God and of all mankind; the loving God with all our heart and soul and strength, as having first loved us, as the Fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we ever hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on earth, as our own soul.

"This love we believe to be the medicine of life, the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world, for all the miseries and vices of men. Wherever this is, there are virtue and happiness going hand in hand. There is humbleness of mind, gentleness, long suffering, the whole image of God, and, at the same time, a peace that passeth all understanding, and joy unspeakable and full of glory.

> 'Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind;
> Each prayer accepted, and each wish resign'd;
> Desires composed, affections ever even;
> Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heaven.'

"This religion we long to see established in the world; a religion of love, and joy, and peace; having its seat in the heart, in the inmost soul, but ever showing itself by its fruits, continually springing forth, not only in all innocence, (for love worketh no ill to his neighbour,) but likewise in every kind of beneficence, spreading virtue and happiness all around it.

"This religion have we been following after for many years, as many know, if they would testify: but all this time seeking wisdom, we found it not; we were spending our strength in vain. And being now under full conviction of this, we declare it to all mankind; for we desire not that others should wander out of the way, as we have done before them; but rather that they may profit by our loss; that they may go (though we did not, having then no man to guide us) the straight way to the religion of love, even by faith.

"Now faith (supposing the Scripture to be of God) is πραγματων ελεγχος α βλεπομενων, the demonstrative evidence of things unseen; the supernatural evidence of things invisible, not perceivable by eyes of flesh, or by any of our natural senses or faculties. Faith is that Divine evidence whereby the spiritual man discerneth God, and the things of God. It is with regard to the spiritual world what sense is with regard to the natural. It is the spiritual sensation of every soul that is born of God.

"Perhaps you have not considered it in this view: I will then explain it a little farther. Faith, according to the Scriptural account, is the eye of the new-born soul. Hereby every true believer in God 'seeth him who is invisible.' Hereby (in a more particular manner since life and immortality have been brought to light by the Gospel) he 'seeth the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;' and beholdeth what manner of love it is which the Father hath be-

stowed upon us, 'that we' (who are born of the Spirit) 'should be called the sons of God.'

"It is the ear of the soul, whereby a sinner 'hears the voice of the Son of God, and lives;' even that voice which alone wakes the dead, —'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.'

"It is (if I may be allowed the expression) the palate of the soul: for hereby a believer 'tastes the good word, and the powers of the world to come;' and hereby he both 'tastes and sees that the Lord is gracious,' yea, and 'merciful to him a sinner.'

"It is the feeling of the soul, whereby a believer perceives, through 'the power of the Highest overshadowing' him, both the existence and the presence of Him in whom he 'lives, moves, and has his being;' and indeed the whole invisible world, the entire system of things eternal. And hereby, in particular, he feels 'the love of God shed abroad in his heart.'

"By this 'faith we are saved' from all uneasiness of mind, from the anguish of a wounded spirit, from discontent, from fear, and sorrow of heart, and from that inexpressible listlessness, and weariness both of the world and of ourselves, which we had so helplessly laboured under for many years; especially when we were out of the hurry of the world, and sunk into calm reflection. In this we find that love of God, and of all mankind, which we had elsewhere sought in vain.—This we know and feel, and therefore cannot but declare, saves every one that partakes of it both from sin and misery, from every unhappy and unholy temper.

> 'Soft peace she brings wherever she arrives,
> She builds her quiet as she forms our lives,
> Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
> And opens in each breast a little heaven.'

"If you ask, 'Why then have not all men this faith? all at least who conceive it to be so happy a thing? Why do they not believe immediately?' We answer, (on the Scripture hypothesis,) 'It is the gift of God.' No man is able to work it in himself. It is a work of omnipotence. It requires no less power thus to quicken a dead soul, than to raise a body that lies in the grave. It is a new creation; and none can create a soul anew but He who at first created the heavens and the earth.

"May not your own experience teach you this? Can you give yourself this faith? Is it now in your power to see, or hear, or taste, or feel God? Have you already, or can you raise in yourself, any perception of God, or of an invisible world? I suppose you do not deny that there is an invisible world. You will not charge it upon poor old Hesiod, to Christian prejudice of education, when he says, in those well-known words,

> 'Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
> Unseen, whether we wake, or if we sleep.'

Now, is there any power in your soul, whereby you discern either these, or Him that created them? Or, can all your wisdom and strength open an intercourse between yourself and the world of spirits? Is it in your power to burst the veil that is on your heart,

and let in the light of eternity? You know it is not. You not only do not, but cannot, by your own strength, thus believe. The more you labour so to do, the more you will be convinced it is the gift of God.

"It is the *free gift* of God, which he bestows not on those who are *worthy* of his favour; not on such as are *previously holy*, and so *fit* to be crowned with all the blessings of his goodness; but on the ungodly and unholy; on those who till that very hour were *fit* only for everlasting destruction; those in whom was no good thing, and whose only plea was, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' No merit, no goodness in man precedes the forgiving love of God. His pardoning mercy supposes nothing in us but a sense of mere sin and misery: and to all who see, and feel, and own their wants, and their utter inability to remove them, God freely gives faith, for the sake of Him in whom he is always well pleased.

"This is a short, rude sketch of the doctrine we teach. These are our fundamental principles; and we spend our lives in confirming others herein, and in a behaviour suitable to them."

The reference which Mr. Wesley here makes to his own personal experience is peculiarly interesting and instructive. Long before he obtained the faith which brings salvation, he was deeply impressed with the necessity of personal holiness; and he used every means in his power to obtain that only qualification for heaven. He procured the finest hymns in all languages, and sung them with the utmost sincerity of devotion; he collected the finest prayers that the universal Church could supply, and repeated them upon his knees before God, with frequency and deep seriousness; yet, after all, he found himself under the dominion of the carnal mind, and in bondage to the corruption of his own evil nature, and to that fear which arises from conscious guilt. He studied all the arguments in favour of natural and revealed religion, and endeavoured thus to fortify his mind against skepticism and infidelity; and yet the thought would often steal upon him, that the universe has existed from eternity, and that there is no future state; and so powerful were these suggestions, and his own heart so prone to yield to them, that he has frequently pursued the thought, till there was scarcely any spirit in him, and he has been ready to choose strangling rather than life.* His devotional exercises never produced in his heart the principle of love to God and all mankind; his reasonings never put him in possession of saving faith; and hence, notwithstanding all his sincerity and efforts, he was neither holy nor happy. His heart was the seat of various evils; and his spirit was restless and uneasy, perpetually sighing for some absent and unknown good. The permanent tranquillity which he enjoyed after he had obtained the faith which is of the operation of God is strongly and beautifully described in his own expressive language which has been just quoted. Nor was Mr. Wesley peculiar in all this. Thousands of persons, in all parts of the kingdom, and of every character and grade in society, were brought by the same means—faith in the blood of atonement—into the same state of purity and peace; and this they enjoyed and exemplified both in life and death.

* Sermon LXX. The Case of Reason impartially Considered. Works, vol. ii, page 130. American edition.

The reality of all this Mr. Southey denies. He makes no attempt to show that Mr. Wesley had mistaken the sense of Scripture, by which he professed in all things to be guided. The Bible is not made the standard of appeal in any part of his controversy with Mr. Wesley; but the poet laureate treats religion entirely as an affair of philosophy. No one, indeed, would have objected to the legitimate application of philosophy in the elucidation of Mr. Wesley's character and conduct; but the philosophy of Mr. Southey unhappily interferes with the most important verities of the Christian revelation. It, in effect, supersedes the providence and the grace of God, and contradicts the obvious sense of Scripture and of every orthodox confession of faith. According to Mr. Southey, the founder of Methodism was not raised up by the providence of God, and invested by him with suitable qualifications for calling the attention of a slumbering and ungodly nation to religion in its spirituality and power; but was made an eminent and successful minister of the Gospel by the circumstances of the times: he was not "thrust forth" into the field by "the Lord of the harvest," in answer to the prayers of the Church; but was prompted to his unparalleled labours by "the stirring of ambition." His success in the conversion of men was not effected by a Divine influence, exerted in connection with the faithful enunciation of the truth of God; but by the arts of the speaker. The sorrows of penitence, and the joys of pardon, were equally the effects of "a new disease;" at the "crisis" of which the sufferer was "filled with all joy and peace in believing." When sinners, abandoned to every vice and crime, became holy and upright, devout and prayerful, they were not renewed in the spirit of their minds by the power of the Holy Ghost; but "Wesley," by his simple eloquence, opened in their hearts sources of piety, of which they had previously been unconscious. All religious experience, from the first dawn of Divine light upon the mind, and the first desire of the heart toward God and heaven, to the consolations of holiness, and the blessedness of dying in the Lord, were to be resolved into an indefinite something denominated "enthusiasm;" and the work of conversion and salvation, which Mr. Wesley was accustomed to call "the work of God," Mr. Southey found to be entirely of human origin, resolvable into the peculiarities of our physical constitution. If all this were true, Mr. Watson saw that he and his brethren in the ministry might apply to themselves and the societies under their care the startling language of St. Paul, uttered on another occasion, "Our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God. Ye are yet in your sins." He also perceived that every neglecter of the Christian salvation, every trifler with religion, might find in Mr. Southey's book a justification of his impenitence and unbelief. Of the sincerity of Mr. Southey's attachment to Christianity, as a Divine revelation, Mr. Watson had no doubt; but he saw that nothing was easier than the application of Mr. Southey's philosophy to the conduct of the primitive Christians, and to many parts of the New Testament, which relate to personal religion, when the whole would appear to be a delusion, an affair merely of passion and imagination.

Mr. Southey's temerity was very offensive to Mr. Watson. He professes great zeal for the interests of the Church of England; but that his attention had never been seriously directed to the vital doctrines

of the Protestant reformers, the learned and pious founders of the establishment, was undeniable. Many of his censures upon the creed of Mr. Wesley apply with equal force to the formularies which received their sanction, and which they sealed with their blood. The philosophy of this professed Churchman, in spite of his prayer book, sets aside the doctrine of original sin and of Satanic agency; it denies the sensible application of the benefits of redemption to individuals through faith; and it leaves all the offices of the Christian comforter to be contemplated and realized by dreaming fanatics. Had this popular writer confined his philosophy to literature and politics, it would never have called forth the animadversion of Mr. Watson; but when it was placed in opposition to principles which have been held sacred by the spiritual part of the Church of God in all ages, and in which the eternal interests of mankind are involved, he felt that silence was a sin; and that "the man who had done this thing" ought to be made answerable at the bar of the Christian public. For Mr. Southey, as one of the first literary men of the age, he had a high respect; and he had long been inclined to think with him on many subjects of national interest; but when, in an evil hour, this distinguished writer so far lost sight of his true calling as to tamper with "the Gospel of our salvation," and expose it to derision under the name of "Methodism," the "spirit" of Mr. Watson was "stirred in him," and he assumed a tone of authority and rebuke to which he had not been accustomed in any of his previous publications. On a somewhat similar occasion Bishop Taylor remarked, in regard to that mysterious intercourse with God which is enjoyed by every spiritual worshipper, and the reality of which men of skeptical minds have so often denied: "This is a subject to be felt, and not to be talked of; and they that never touched it with their finger may secretly, perhaps, laugh at it in their heart, and be never the wiser."

The title of Mr. Watson's work is, "Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley: being a Defence of the Character, Labours, and Opinions of the Founder of Methodism against the Misrepresentations of that Publication." It is distinguished throughout by great force of reasoning, and contains many passages of superior beauty and eloquence.—As a vindication of Mr. Wesley's views and proceedings, it was not inferior to any work that had appeared since the publication of his own incomparable "Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," about eighty years before. The writer shows that Mr. Wesley's character and tenets are to be judged of by a higher standard than that of a flippant philosophy; yet he often meets his opponent upon the ground which he himself had chosen, and "takes from him the armour in which he trusted."

Independently of the general bearing of this work, as a defence of Mr. Wesley, it contains valuable remarks and suggestions upon several collateral subjects of interest and importance. Mr. Watson's Methodism was of a purely Wesleyan character, and never rendered him hostile to the established Church; nor did he think that the spirit of intolerance was at all peculiar to her adherents. Having stated the reasons which induced, on the part of the Methodist societies, a partial separation from her pale, he says, "That a great and most gratifying alteration has taken place, within a few years, both in the doctrine and lives of the national clergy, is certain; and by none is this circumstance

more gladly hailed than by the Methodists. The statement of the facts mentioned above was necessary to explain the reasons which led to a departure from Mr. Wesley's original plan; but it is not made in a spirit of hostility to the Church of England, in so many respects to be venerated, and for whose growing prosperity and perpetuity the wishes of none are more sincere than my own. I would not forget that she is 'the mother of us all;' and I can never contemplate without the deepest admiration her noble army of confessors and martyrs, and the illustrious train of her divines, whose writings have been, and continue to be, the light of Christendom. Bigotry in forms of Church government has a peculiar absurdity. Different opinions as to many *doctrines* may certainly plead the authority of the letter of Scripture with a much better grace than it can be urged when used to support the details of Church order; points which the Holy Spirit has left so much at large as to furnish us only with principles and not with forms. All beside the appointment of faithful men to minister the word and sacraments, and to bear rule in the Church, so as to drive away errors and vices, is matter of pure inference. A bigot for Independency or Presbyterianism, and a bigot for diocesan episcopacy and apostolical succession, stand upon nearly the same ground. There is little difference between the spirit of Laud, and that which *burns* in the unhallowed writings of Robinson of Cambridge, and a recent History of the Dissenters.* The meekness and gentleness of Christ is as far removed from the one as the other; and persecution, in one form or other, must ever result from the want of charity, when that which 'letteth' is removed out of the way."

He was a warm admirer of the liturgy of the Church of England, and thought its general introduction into the Methodist chapels on the forenoon of the Lord's day greatly to be desired. "The liturgy," says he, "*secures* the reading of a large portion of the Scriptures; it *secures* also, what Mr. Wesley has properly called 'the four grand parts of public worship;' it makes the service of God's house appear more like our true *business* on the Lord's day; and beside the aid it affords to the most devout and spiritual, a great body of evangelical truth is, by the constant use, laid up in the minds of children and ignorant people, who, when at length they begin to pray under a religious concern, are already furnished with suitable, sanctifying, solemn, and impressive petitions. Persons well acquainted with the liturgy are certainly in a state of important preparation for the labours of the preacher; and their piety often takes a richer and more sober character from that circumstance."

On the influence of Methodism upon public morals, and the national welfare, Mr. Watson remarks, "Mr. Southey has applied too much of his attention to such subjects not to know that a number of those demoralizing causes were then coming into operation, which, with all

* The History here referred to is that by Doctors Bogue and Bennet. As a literary composition it is alternately flippant and dull; but its distinguishing characteristic is hostility to the established Church, and to the Wesleyan Methodists, whose tenets and character are described with little regard for either truth or charity. An abridged edition of this work has lately been published, by Dr. Bennet, in which some of the sarcasms upon Mr. Wesley and his preachers are expunged; but their views of Christian theology are grossly misrepresented.

the counteractions since supplied by the Church, and the different religious sects, by schools, and by Bibles, have produced very injurious effects upon the morals and principles of the nation; that the tide of an unprecedented commercial prosperity began then to flow into the country, and continued, for a long succession of years, to render the means of sensual indulgence more ample, and to corrupt more deeply all ranks of society; that in consequence of the independence thus given to the lower orders in many of the most populous districts, the moral control and influence of the higher became gradually weaker; that the agitation of political subjects, during the American quarrel, and the French revolution, with the part which even the operative classes were able to take in such discussions, by means of an extended education, produced, as will always be the case among the half informed, a strong tendency to republicanism,—a restless desire of political change on every pinching of the times, and its constant concomitant, an aversion to the national establishment, partly as the result of ill-digested theories, partly as controlling the favourite notions of the disaffected, and partly because this feeling was encouraged by the negligent habits of the clergy, and the absence of that influence they might have acquired in their parishes by careful pastoral attentions. To all this is to be added the diffusion of infidel principles, both of foreign and home growth, which, from the studies of the learned, descended into the shop of the mechanic, and, embodied in cheap and popular works, found their way into every part of the empire. To counteract agencies and principles so active and so pernicious, it is granted that no means have yet been applied of complete adequacy. This is the reason why their effects are so rife in the present day; and that we are now in the midst of a state of things which no considerate man can contemplate without anxiety. These circumstances, so devastating to morals and good principles, could only have been fully neutralized by the ardent exertions of every clergyman in his parish, of every dissenting minister in his congregation, of every Methodist preacher in his circuit, of every private Christian in his own circle, or in the place which useful and pious institutions of various kinds would have assigned him; and even the special blessing of God, that influence upon men's minds, and that efficient co-operation with human means, which Mr. Southey treats so lightly, would have been necessary to give effect to the whole. But had no correctives been applied, what had been the present state of the nation and of the Church? The labours of the founders of Methodism were from the beginning directly counteractive of the evils just mentioned; and those have little reason to stigmatize them, who deplore such evils most, and yet have done least for their correction and restraint. Wherever these men went, they planted the principles of religion in the minds of the multitudes who heard them; they acted on the *offensive* against immorality, infidelity, and error; the societies they raised were employed in doing good to all; the persons they associated with them in the work of national reformation were always engaged in spreading good principles; and though great multitudes were beyond their reach, they spread themselves into every part of the land, turning the attention of men to religious concerns, calming their passions, guarding them against the strifes of the world, enjoining the Scriptural principles of 'obedience to magistrates,' and a sober, temperate, peacca-

ble, and benevolent conduct. The direct effect of their exertions was great; and it increased in energy and extent as the demoralizing causes before mentioned acquired also greater activity; and when their indirect influence began to appear more fully in the national Church, and in other religious bodies, remedies more commensurate with the evils existing in the country began to be applied. I shall not affect to say what would have been the state of the Church of England under the uncontrolled operation of all the causes of moral deterioration and civil strife to which I have adverted; or what hold that Church would have had upon the people at this day, had the spirit of religion not been revived in the country; and if, when ancient prejudices had been destroyed by the spread of deleterious novelties in the opinions of men, no new bond between it and the nation at large had been created. But if, as I am happy to believe, the national Church has much more moral influence, and much more respect, now than formerly; and that its influence and the respect due to it are increasing with the increase of its clergy, this is all owing to the existence of a stronger spirit of piety; and in producing that, the first great instruments were the men stigmatized as '*enthusiasts*' by the author of the 'Life of Wesley.' Not only has the spirit which they excited improved the religious state of the Church, but it has disposed the great body of religious people not of the Church to admire and respect those numerous members of the establishment, both clergymen and laics, whose eminent piety, talents, and usefulness have done more to abate the prejudices arising from different views of Church government, than a thousand treatises could have effected, however eloquently written, or ably argued."

In answer to Mr. Southey's allegation, that Mr. Wesley was prompted by "ambition" to his extraordinary course of labour, Mr. Watson very forcibly remarks, "It is mere trifling to speak of 'ambition,' in the case of Mr. Wesley, in any but the best sense. *Wealth*, it is acknowledged, was not his object; the only *honour* he met with was to be reproached and persecuted; and the *power* of which we have heard so much, was the power to manage the affairs of a despised and a poor people.—What was there in this to tempt that low and corrupt ambition which Mr. Southey ascribes to him? I fear that ambitious clergymen may now be found in the Church: let then the question of Mr. Wesley's ambition be put to the proof. Will any of them come among us to seek its gratification? We will give them as many advantages for obtaining the 'notoriety' which Mr. Wesley possessed as possible. They shall have enough of duty, long walks, and longer rides, and fields and streets to preach in, and the darkest parts of the country, and the rudest of the people, and the hardest fare. In proportion, too, as they imitate the zeal of the Wesleys, we will show them all honour and respect on our part; and they will not lack that reproach of which the world is not much more parsimonious in the present day, than when the names of the Wesleys were cast out as evil. It will not fail to calumniate them while living, if they give it too much disturbance; and perhaps some future poet laureate may lay by his birth-day and coronation odes to asperse them when dead. Will all this tempt their ambition? I suppose not. Neither in their day nor night dreams does Methodism ever occur to them as the road to honour; and yet if it opened to Mr. Wesley so fine a field for the gratification of his ambition, why should not

theirs press into the same course, in the hope of seizing the same prize? Have they learning? So had he. Have they prospects in the Church? So had he. Have they ambition? So, Mr. Southey tells us, had he. How then is it that he alone, of all the ambitious clergymen we ever heard or read of, was impelled by it into the course he adopted; and that none beside himself ever thought that field preaching and itinerancy opened the way to a distinction sufficient to allay the ambitious appetite of any 'conqueror,' or any 'poet?' I leave the difficulty to be explained by him who created it."

These extracts may serve as a specimem of Mr. Watson's eloquent and argumentative publication; through the whole of which he has decidedly the advantage over his antagonist; not only because of his superior theological knowledge, but in the comprehensiveness of his views, and in philosophic reasoning. The principal questions at issue between him and his opponent are not mere opinions, on which men may innocently differ, but affect the essential doctrines of human salvation. In this light they were viewed by one of the most learned prelates of the English Church, who expressed his cordial thanks to Mr. Watson for his triumphant defence of those great principles of personal religion which were distinctly recognized by all the Protestant reformers.

Mr. Watson's work has been very extensively read, especially in the Methodist connection. From the time of its first appearance it has been in regular demand; and a fourth edition has lately been printed A copy of it is said to have fallen into the hands of the prince regent, afterward George the Fourth, soon after it was published; and was read by him with considerable interest and avidity. His opinion concerning it was indicated with sufficient explicitness by the remark which he made on finishing its perusal: "Mr. Watson has the advantage over my poet laureate." As a defence of the providence and grace of God, against the speculations of a skeptical philosophy, it is invaluable, and is well adapted, by the blessing of God, to settle the minds of young persons of education on subjects the most important that can possibly occupy their attention.

In the early part of the year 1821 Mr. Watson's sympathy was awakened, as was that of his brethren throughout the kingdom, by the sickness and death of the venerable Joseph Benson. He was a man of small stature; and his voice was weak and inharmonious; yet he was one of the most powerful and impressive preachers that ever lived. Having passed through a course of sound classical training in his native county of Cumberland, he entered himself as a member of the university of Oxford; but as his Methodism rendered him obnoxious to his tutor, who was the vice principal of the hall to which he belonged, and he was given to understand that the requisite testimonials both for taking his degree and obtaining ordination, would be withheld, he followed what to him appeared to be the opening of Providence, and became an itinerant preacher in connection with Mr. Wesley. His acquaintance with theology and the Holy Scriptures was accurate, profound, and comprehensive; his zeal was intense, and his preaching elaborate, instructive, and awakening, almost beyond example. When stationed in the populous towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire, he was generally attended by immense congregations, who were frequently so

affected under his word, as to be moved to loud wailing, and to seek relief in united prayer, in which they were joined by their faithful minister. Often has he kneeled down in the midst of his sermons, that his hearers might give expression to their penitential sorrows, and pour out their hearts before the God of mercy. The people, therefore, who were converted from the error of their way, and brought to a saving knowledge of Christ, by his instrumentality, were exceedingly numerous. When Mr. Watson knew him, in London, he was "a very aged man," nearly worn out in the service of his Lord; but he still retained his mental vigour, and all the simplicity and fervour of his early piety. For the last twenty years of his life he was the editor of the Methodist Magazine; and during that period, among other useful publications, he wrote an invaluable Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, in which he brought the entire course of his theological and Biblical studies to bear with admirable effect. Mr. Watson highly esteemed this apostolic man. His deep and matured piety, great usefulness, sanctified learning, and disinterested zeal in giving the whole of his literary labours to the connection of which he was a member, all rendered him an object of interest and cordial affection with Mr. Watson, who delighted in his company, and in the contemplation of his character. This revered minister of Christ died in the Lord, Feb. 16th, 1821, aged seventy-four years, leaving one of the most bright and spotless examples to mankind. As in the case of the first Christian martyr, "devout men carried him" also "to his grave, and made great lamentation over him;" because in him the Church and the world had sustained an irreparable loss. Mr. Bunting preached the funeral sermon at the City-Road chapel; and afterward published in the Methodist Magazine a just and beautiful character of the venerable deceased. Many other ministers preached sermons on the same occasion in different parts of the kingdom, and particularly in London and the neighbourhood, where Mr. Benson had long been known. In this service Mr. Watson took an honourable and distinguished part; and improved the death of this great and good man, in a sermon which he delivered in the Hinde-street chapel, near Manchester-square.

In the year 1820 an altercation was introduced in regard to the time of making up the financial accounts of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. For many years those accounts had been closed in the month of June; but it was now deemed advisable to keep them open till the end of the year. This arrangement, of course, occasioned considerable delay in the publication of the annual report, which did not appear till the new year was considerably advanced. It was, however, put into circulation in sufficient time to meet the wants of the auxiliary societies which held their several anniversaries in the spring; and its details were highly satisfactory. The income of the institution for the year was £23,711. 7*s.* 5*d.*; and to December, 31st, £31,360. 8*s.* 4*d.* During this entire period no less than twenty-nine missionaries were sent out by the committee,—three to India, fourteen to the West Indies, two to Newfoundland, two to New South Wales, one to France, two to Sierra-Leone, one to Nova-Scotia, two to Hayti, and two to Southern Africa. The number of missionaries actually employed by the society was about one hundred and forty.

Notwithstanding the addition of so many missionaries from year to

year, the society was unable to keep pace with the demands continually made upon it; and hence the report states: "Beside the missionaries recently sent out, and those on the eve of departure, the demands of old stations, where the work is enlarging, and has become too extensive for the present number of labourers to perform; and the supply necessary for new stations, where there is the greatest need for evangelical cultivation, and where hopeful opportunities to commence it present themselves, leave the society still in arrears to the calls of perishing men, and to providential indications, by a very considerable number of missionaries. These are circumstances which the committee would affectionately commend to the solemn consideration of the society; to its most active members in all parts of the kingdom; and to the friends of religion in general. Scenes of holy exertion are opening to the Church of Christ on every side; and the same reasons and motives which have already urged us to insipient operations for the moral recovery of the world remain in unabated force, and call for their continuance and enlargement. The various stations in the pagan world, which now present themselves to the notice of missionary societies,—'the regions beyond' those where, through their care, Christ is now, though but lately, 'named,'—are not less sterile of good, and prolific of evil, than the places already taken into cultivation. In none of them does vice appear in forms less malignant; the darkness is as intense and bewildering as that which begins to roll itself away before the light of the missions which have been recently established; the case of their inhabitants is helpless and pitiable as that of the people who have already both been pitied and aided by the friends of modern missions; and the obligations of Christians to extend the blessings of their Divine religion as far as their *power* will permit, remain unshaken and unchanged. That power, the committee are persuaded, is not exhausted; and they are therefore encouraged to indulge even the 'full assurance of hope,' that they will be enabled, by the accession of new friends, and the active prosecution of the plans of auxiliary and branch missionary societies throughout the kingdom, to supply demands so pressing, and to extend the visitations of light and mercy into new scenes of darkness and misery, so truly necessitous."

There are various passages in this report written by Mr. Watson in his happiest manner. Speaking of New South Wales, he says, "The number of missionaries has been increased to three; and when the extent of the present population is considered, with the manner in which they are dispersed through the colony, and also that an average of not fewer than two thousand convicts are annually cast upon its shores from Great Britain and Ireland, this will appear but a scant supply; and the destitute state of the settlers, and the moral condition of the unhappy convicts, whose numbers are so greatly increasing, will powerfully engage the sympathy of all good men in behalf of a mission employed for the benefit of both. The connection, too, of the colony of New South Wales with numerous islands in the South Seas, with which its commercial intercourse is constantly enlarging, gives it a higher interest as a missionary station. The extension of the moralizing and saving influence of Christianity among its inhabitants must ultimately have an important effect upon many populous parts of the

earth, where now all the ignorance and ferocity of savage life reign without control, and which incipient civilization, where it has commenced, unconnected with Christianity, has not in the least mitigated. How cheering is the prospect in that part of the world, even in its dawn! If now New South Wales is sending forth rays of sacred light upon the long-benighted islands of the Pacific, what results may not be expected from the multiplication of the means of Christian instruction, and the diffusion of the spirit of religion among its inhabitants? Perhaps it is not too much to hope, that by the wonderful dispensations of Providence, this colony, once literally 'a den of thieves,' may become the Great Britain of the Southern Ocean; and spread Christianity, science, and commerce throughout its numerous and populous islands."

In regard to the formation of a mission in New-Zealand, which was then projected, it is said, "The inhabitants of the north island of New-Zealand are computed at not less than a million. They are a fine and intelligent race of savages, anxious for civil improvement, and favourably impressed, through the benevolent exertions of the Rev. Samuel Marsden, and the Church society, with the missionary character, and with Christianity. To them the way is fully open; and some of the most powerful chiefs have promised to place their children under the instruction of the missionaries. The progress of truth, and the influence which it uniformly exerts upon external manners, may therefore be speedily expected to abolish many of those distressing and cruel practices which are perpetrated by the inhabitants in their pagan state. The infliction of death upon the wife on the decease of her husband, the slaughter of prisoners taken in war, often to gratify a cannibal appetite, with other customs by which their habitations are made 'habitations of cruelty,' still prevail in the greater part of the island, though happily checked around the mission stations. Notwithstanding this ferocity, there are great natural qualities among this people, and even a sense of honour and magnanimity. They are industrious, imitative, and ingenious; and when brought under the influence of the Gospel, and with the advantage of the useful arts, will become an important people. These are the probable results which will interest the public as men; but as Christians, the objects are nobler. The truth of God, and the means of salvation, will be placed within the reach of a million of our fellow men, should the work which has been begun by missionary societies be properly supported, and receive the blessing of God; and another people, for ages separated from the human family, and 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,' be brought within its pale, and receive its oracles, its God, and its Saviour."

After giving some extended and encouraging details concerning the progress of Christianity among the negro slaves in the West Indies, the writer of the report exclaims, "Such are the cheering prospects which this our oldest mission, the mission to the negro slaves in the West India colonies, continues to present. On the toils of those who commenced the work, and carried it on through great difficulties, through calumnies, and reproaches, and misrepresentations, and in some instances through personal sufferings and imprisonment, a Christian public may look back with triumph. The root of the tree of life has struck wide and deep into those lands of darkness and death; and

numerous Christian societies, differing in colour from ourselves, but with feelings beating in unison with our own to the name and glories of our adorable Saviour, 'both their Lord and ours,' sit with grateful joy under its shadow. Their labour is lightened by inward peace; the sanctities of home, and the feelings of kindred, have visited the negro hut; the voice of praise is heard in their dwellings; the Sabbath witnesses them with early steps flowing into the houses of prayer, where they have heard, and where they feel that 'the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him;' and in instances, not to be numbered till the great day of revelation, has the dying negro, once the child of African superstition, breathed his spirit into the bosom of our common Saviour. The committee need not use great efforts to interest the public in such a work; it requires no 'letters of recommendation' beside the marked and glorious facts which it has registered in its own story. But when it is stated that it is a work, not only capable of enlargement, but which, in its invitations to greater extension, actually outruns the present means which the committee possess, and that opportunities of extending it to the full supply of religious care to a still larger proportion of the many hundred thousands of slaves, still in their pagan state, are continually offering themselves, they are confident that by this statement they open a scene of future hope to the pious mind, which cannot but engage warmer interests and new efforts in its behalf. Why should we not put away from us the reproach of a long-continued and criminal neglect of a race of our fellow men, employed in our toils; who look up to us as their masters; call our country their *home*, though they may never see it; and who have ever repaid the cultivation of zeal and piety by harvests so abundant? Let the means of increasing the institutions and ordinances of religion but be afforded them by the charity of Christians, and in a few years the last dark cloud of pagan gloom shall roll away from the beautiful islands which compose the Columbian Archipelago, and the knowledge of the Gospel diffuse itself through every plantation, and spread peace, security, harmony, and the blessing of God throughout the whole."

After some general remarks on the subject of missions, Mr. Watson says:—"It is impossible to fix our attention on these astonishing operations, with constancy, without catching new ardour, and feeling a vast expansion of soul, attempting to equal, but still falling short of, the immeasurable designs of redeeming love and power. In this habit of thinking and feeling lukewarmness and selfishness can have no place; and it will be sustained by the constant and more perfect developement of those designs which must now run on to their accomplishment, until the whole world shall be subdued to our God and Saviour. Silently, but swiftly, is the true light penetrating the long-accumulated darkness of Africa; secretly is the influence of true religion and European science undermining the vast, the polluted, and at one time thought the immovable bulwarks of Indian superstition. They are disjointing, and tremble to their fall. A spirit of inquiry is excited in some Mohammedan countries,—the first but joyful omen of the dissipation of the grand imposture; the pagan slaves of our colonies are hastening yearly in great numbers into the Church of Christ; distant islands of the southern sea have cast away their idols, and others are beckoning the messengers of God to their shores. The

circulation of the Scriptures in different tongues is reviving the light, and giving life to many fallen and corrupted Churches in different parts of Christendom; while extended school establishments, in various parts of the world, are pre-occupying the minds of many thousands of the children of pagans with principles opposed to every form of Gentile error, and to every superstitious practice. Such are the views which are now spread before every contemplative mind, interested in observing the 'signs of His coming,' to whom, finally, shall be given 'dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.'

"For the coming of that kingdom, let us more devoutly and fervently pray; knowing that every endeavour of ours at home, and even the more important and arduous labours of our brethren abroad, can only ripen into successful issues by the special blessing of God. In a spirit of humble dependence upon him, let all our engagements, whether of counsel or exertion, be conducted; and for those especially who are bearing 'the testimony of Jesus' in foreign lands, let us lift up our hearts, that they make full proof of their ministry, and in every place make 'manifest the savour of the knowledge of Christ,' and present the Gentiles an offering to God, 'sanctified by the Holy Ghost.'"

During the spring of 1821 Mr. Watson visited several large towns in different parts of the kingdom, for the purpose of affording assistance at the anniversaries of auxiliary and branch missionary societies. He also prepared the report of the general society, for the annual meeting, which was held at the City-Road chapel, London, on Monday, April 30th. Colonel Sandys, from India, a tried friend of the society, occupied the chair on this occasion, in the unavoidable absence of Mr. Butterworth, who was in a state of ill health. The applications for admission to this meeting were numerous beyond example. Mr. Watson read the report, which described the prosperous state of the society's affairs. The number of missionaries was increased to nearly one hundred and fifty; the stations occupied were more than one hundred; and upward of twenty-seven thousand members were united in Church fellowship, under the care of the missionaries, and the fruit of their zealous labour. W. H. Trant, Esq., and Colonel Munro, both recently returned from India, bore testimony to the necessity of missionary exertions in that benighted region, and encouraged the society to more extended and vigorous efforts. The Rev. William Ward, of the Baptist mission at Serampore, then about to return to India, spoke at considerable length, and in a manner worthy of his high character, both as a man of God, and an able missionary. He described in strong terms the difficulties with which he and his brethren had to contend when they commenced their labours in India. The Hindoos were in a wretched condition. "Such was their ignorance and hardness of heart," said Mr. Ward, in his emphatical manner, "that, before we could make any progress in our work, we had a conscience to create." It is difficult to conceive of zeal and piety more pure and elevated, and of a catholic spirit more genuine and expansive, than those which appeared in Mr. Ward upon this occasion. He declared his reliance for the success of all missions to be upon the promised effusions of the

Holy Spirit; and hence, he connected the progress of the work of God abroad with the ceaseless prayers of the Churches at home. In expressing his Christian regard for the agents of the society whose cause he was then pleading, he said, "The Wesleyan missionaries yield to none in love to their Saviour, which is so essentially necessary to keep alive the missionary flame. And they yield to none in another grand point, which is the freeness of their invitations. Blessed be God, they feel no hesitation in their offers of mercy. This is their darling theme; and it suits the missionary cause extremely well. They depend entirely upon Divine influence. Their eyes are always fixed on that; and feeling that they are but weak instruments in the hand of God, they go forward in their simple career, looking to God for his influence; and, blessed be his holy name, that influence is not withheld." In full accordance with these sentiments, Mr. Ward, a few days after this meeting, requested as many Wesleyan ministers, then in London, as could conveniently attend, to meet him at the mission house in Hatton Garden, at a given time, that they might commend him in united prayer to the Divine protection during his voyage to India, where he had long laboured; and that, on resuming his ministry there, it might be rendered abundantly successful by the blessing of the Lord the Spirit. It is needless to add, that his request was complied with. The heart of Mr. Watson clave to this distinguished missionary; and their kindred and sanctified spirits have now met in a happier region, where their former anxieties and labours in the cause of Christ are amply rewarded.

At the anniversary just referred to, there was an unusual display of Christian liberality; the contributions amounting to upward of one thousand pounds. A spirit of holy triumph and zeal pervaded the vast assembly at the public meeting, which was greatly promoted by the preparatory religious services. This fact arrested the attention of Mr. Watson, and drew from him the following remarks, which he inserted in the missionary notices:—"The three sermons, usual on this occasion, were this year preached on Thursday and Friday, April 26th and 27th, in the chapels of City-Road, Queen-street, and Lambeth, by the Rev. Messrs. Buckley, Robert Newton, and Lessey, jun. We take this opportunity of remarking, that we are more than ever convinced of the great importance of connecting such services with the public meetings of missionary societies, whether in town or country. They greatly tend by the Divine blessing to produce a serious and hallowed tone of feeling; to chasten and sanctify that high and cheerful excitement which naturally results from the happy intercourse of large numbers of friends with each other at these anniversaries, and from the speeches addressed to them, when so assembled, on some of the most interesting and often delightful topics to which the attention of human beings can be directed; and to maintain those great principles by which alone the purity and permanence of missionary zeal can be secured, in their proper position of paramount authority and obligation, as essentially identified with whatever is sacred and amiable in our holy religion, and founded upon the peremptory injunctions of Divine revelation. For public meetings, as affording the very best facilities for the communication of important intelligence, both as to the incipient success, and as to the still existing

necessity of missionary labours, we are sincere and decided advocates. We believe they are greatly blessed by Almighty God, not only in the excitement, but in the proper and efficient direction of benevolent zeal and activity; and that if they were neglected or discouraged, a large portion of our present means of doing good must at once be (in our judgment, most foolishly and criminally) abandoned. But if missionary sermons, without meetings, would leave the work in most cases but half done; we fear, on the other hand, the missionary meetings, unconnected with sermons, suited to the solemn occasion, and with other special and appropriate exercises of social devotion, would soon lose, by such omission, more than half of their present blessing to ourselves, and of their eventual utility to those for whose illumination and salvation they are principally convened. For the various information on missionary topics, and for the free and spirited displays of Christian eloquence, which characterize a good public meeting, we are best prepared when we take time and pains to 'sanctify' the whole system 'by the word of God and prayer.' Much of this holy influence, we trust, was felt in our late general meeting, as the result, under God, of the three annual sermons to which we have referred; and of those which were preached in various chapels on the subsequent Sabbath."

Scarcely had the stir and hurry of this memorable anniversary subsided before we find Mr. Watson again itinerating through the country, as the zealous advocate of the Wesleyan missions, and the bearer of intelligence respecting their success and prospects. The following letter discloses a part of his plan and proceedings:—

To Mr. William Walton, Wakefield.

London, May 4th, 1821.

My Dear Sir,—In my various wanderings this spring, I have not been nearer to you than Manchester, or I should have done myself the pleasure to call upon a family for whom I feel, and shall continue to feel, an unabated respect and affection.

On Sunday, the 13th, and Monday, the 14th, I shall, God willing, be at Sheffield; and on Tuesday shall have to pass through Wakefield, on my way to Bradford, to attend the missionary meeting there at two o'clock in the afternoon, and preach in the evening. On the Sunday following I must be at Nottingham; so that I shall have to pass through Wakefield a second time.

I cannot suffer these opportunities to pass, without spending a few hours, either in going or returning, or both, if it were only to say that I have a very grateful remembrance of your past kindnesses to me; and that I shall always feel happy in a few hours of your society, and that of your excellent family. I pray that I may find you all in health and peace.

The bustle of our public meetings in London is nearly over. Our own meeting on Monday was a noble one. Two gentlemen from India (Mr. Trant, and Colonel Munro) attended, and gave an important testimony in favour of missions in India; and assured us that from all they had observed, after a long residence in India, the superstitions of that country are giving way, and the kingdom of our Lord must be triumphant.

Want of time, and very pressing daily engagements, have prevented me from writing to you, though I have often intended it. This, however, you must impute to any thing rather than want of respect.—I have availed myself of every opportunity of inquiring after your welfare.

I have been lately in various parts of the country; and find that this year is one of the most prosperous in the connection, we have for a long time had. Many parts of Kent have had extraordinary visitations. More than two thousand souls have been added to the societies in the Potteries of Staffordshire; at Liverpool six or seven hundred have been added; and in many other places there has been great prosperity. Thus is the Lord remembering Zion, and building the wall in troublous times.

We have had much sickness in our family since I saw you; but we are all better; though neither Mrs. Watson nor Mary is very well.—We have learned, however, I trust, that He who cannot err must do all things well. To him be praise and glory. To-morrow I leave town for Bristol; and I shall not be at home again before I see you; as I cross the country, and take Worcester and Birmingham on my way to Sheffield.

My kind regards to Miss Walton and Miss Ann, with my best wishes of every kind; and also to my old friends the doctor and Mrs. Ellis.

CHAPTER XV.

The Conference of 1821—Letter to Mr. Walton—To his Daughter—Mr. Watson's Appointment to the Office of Resident Missionary Secretary—Becomes a private Member of a Class—Letter to the Rev. Robert Young—Missionary Tour in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire—Letter to Mrs. Watson—Mr. Watson's Contributions to the Wesleyan Magazine—Doctrine of the witness of the Spirit—Sermon on Man magnified—Begins to write his Theological Institutes—Missionary Report for 1821—Mission in Ceylon—New-Holland—New-Zealand—Western and Southern Africa—Income of the Missionary Society—Mr. Watson visits Cornwall—Letter to Mr. Walton.

Mr. Watson attended the conference of 1821, which was held in Manchester, uncertain as to the place where his future lot would be cast. At that time London was only divided into two circuits; and as he had been stationed in both of them, he could not, consistently with the rules of the connection, be re-appointed to the metropolis as an itinerant preacher. The friends in Birmingham were anxious to secure his labours, and urgently solicited his appointment to their circuit. In consequence of the growing extent and importance of the missions, it was necessary that the society should employ a second resident secretary, in order to their efficient and successful management: Mr. Watson's long experience, established character as a public man, distinguished ability, and active habits, all pointed him out as eminently qualified for that very responsible situation; and the committee pressed the conference to fix him in that station. During the sitting of the conference, and while the question of his destination was

undecided, he addressed the following letter to his excellent and affectionate friend:—

To Mr. William Walton, Wakefield.

Manchester, July, 1821.

My Dear Friend,—Thinking that it might interest you to know how we are going on at conference, I send you a slight sketch. Mr. Marsden has been elected president, and Mr. Newton is the secretary. We are going on well, and harmoniously. The increase in the societies has been upward of nine thousand at home, and about one thousand three hundred in our foreign missions. Blessed be God!

Our finances are also very rapidly improving. More than sixty persons have offered themselves as travelling preachers, and most of them for the missions; so that we shall have no lack of men, if we can but get the money to send and support them.

Where I shall be placed, I do not yet know; whether London or Birmingham. However, I can say that I only wish to be where I may best serve the great cause of Jesus Christ.

While I am writing, the preachers are speaking of good Mr. Benson; and many interesting anecdotes have been mentioned respecting his great character and extensive usefulness. "Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets do they live for ever?" May we also be ready!

I shall, all being well, be at Bradford on Sunday; but as the president has issued an order that no preacher shall go away on Saturday before the afternoon, and that every one that leaves the town must return on Monday morning, I shall not have an opportunity of calling to see you, which I should have been most happy to do. However, be assured, that whether present or absent, I have an unabated affection for you all. May you live daily in the richest enjoyment of the blessing of the Gospel of peace in all its fulness!

Present my kindest regards to Miss Walton, and Miss Ann; and to our mutual friends, Dr. and Mrs. Ellis. I shall be happy to hear from you during the conference.

After the comparative claims of the missions, and of the Birmingham circuit, had been fully heard and balanced in the conference, it was determined that Mr. Watson should remain in London, as one of the resident secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society; an office which he sustained with the highest credit to himself, and advantage to the mission cause, for the space of six successive years. This appointment was suited to his declining health; and it secured to him greater leisure than he had enjoyed for several years. His duties were, indeed, numerous and urgent; but he was freed from the cares and engagements of the itinerant ministry, and generally spent his evenings in his study. The time which he could thus command, he devoted to the composition of valuable theological works, by which he rendered essential service to the cause of true religion. Higher objects were secured by this arrangement than either he or the conference at that time anticipated. He surrendered himself in prayer to the Divine guidance and direction; and his confidence was never disappointed. His way was made plain before him; and his Lord con-

ferred great honour upon him, by the labours which were assigned him in the Church.

During the sittings of this conference Mr. Watson addressed the following letter to his daughter. It shows the tenderness of his affection as a father, and his earnest desire for her mental improvement and spiritual interests

Manchester, July 31st, 1821.

My Dear Mary,—From one of your uncle's letters I learn that you are still at Portsmouth; and as we are not to remove from London this year, I am not anxious about your stay being a little prolonged, as I hope it may be favourable to your health, and fit you for closer application on your return. I hope, however, to see you on my return, which I expect will be in about a week or ten days.

The kindness of friends to you I feel as an obligation to myself.—Thank them for yourself and me.

I trust, my dear girl, that you have not neglected to meet in class; nor to remember that the good desires which by the mercy of God you have received must be carefully cultivated. In order to this, spend some part of your time every day in private, in reading God's holy word, and in praying to your Father who seeth in secret. Choose the good part, which shall not be taken from you; and live every day as a person who has chosen it. Let your intercourse with others be cheerful, but serious; and let the fear of an all-seeing God never depart from you.

We are getting on pretty well and expeditiously with business, and hope soon to come to a conclusion. I write this in conference, and have no time for a long epistle.

God bless you, my dearest child!

At this conference Mr. Watson was again requested to write the pastoral address to the societies; and the topics upon which he expatiated were of permanent interest, and of the highest possible importance.

Mr. Watson's colleagues in the missionary secretaryship were his friends the Rev. Jabez Bunting, who was also appointed Mr. Benson's successor, as the editor of the Methodist Magazine; and the Rev. Joseph Taylor, who resided in the mission house, in Hatton-Garden. On his return from the conference Mr. Watson removed from his residence in Margaret-street, to a house in Wellington-street, behind the chapel-of-ease at Pentonville. This place was a convenient distance from the mission house, to which he was accustomed daily to resort, for the discharge of his official duties.

He was now freed from the cares and responsibilities connected with the pastoral office, in which he had been accustomed, as a Methodist preacher, to take his full share, and was at liberty to direct his entire attention to the concerns of the missions, and to literary objects; but there was one inconvenience connected with his new situation which caused him some anxiety. He was aware of the intimate connection between personal religion, and his own spiritual safety and happiness; and he had long been convinced that nothing under the name of religion either corresponds with the representations of Scripture, or meets the wants of men, unless it includes the possession and exercise of

holy and devout affections. One principal means of preserving such affections in a state of growing purity and vigour, his own experience and observation had shown to be "the communion of saints," maintained by united prayer, and by spiritual conversation, according to the apostolic admonition, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." As an itinerant preacher, Mr. Watson had enjoyed the advantages of Christian fellowship in the quarterly visitation of the classes, and other meetings of a similar kind; but in his present situation he was cut off from his former intimate connection with the societies, and his "pure mind" was no longer "stirred up by way of remembrance," as it had formerly been, by regularly listening to recitals of religious experience. To meet this deficiency, and with a reference to his own spiritual improvement, he entered his name as a private member of a class, under the care of Mr. Wright Turnell, which held its weekly meetings at a house in Myddleton-street, Spafields. Mr. Turnell was an aged Methodist, whose religious character had been tried by great vicissitudes of life; and he had invariably maintained his integrity. He could tell many a tale of early Methodism, and describe the preaching of the Wesleys, and Mr. Fletcher, and Walter Sellon, and their contemporaries; but that which recommended him to Mr. Watson was his deep and simple piety. The class consisted mostly of poor people, accustomed to daily labour; but they were spiritual worshippers of God; their hearts and treasure were in heaven; and they used to meet together weekly, to declare the goodness of the Lord, and to be helpers of each other's joy. With these simple-hearted people Mr. Watson was wont to associate once a week, in the evening, when his health would permit; and their meetings, unobserved by the world, were often seasons of great spiritual refreshment and edification. On his appearance in the room, among his humble friends, he was generally requested to act the part of the class leader; and it was observed that the advice which he gave to each person, after inquiring into his state, was almost always expressed in the language of Scripture, in the application of which he possessed a remarkable facility. Mr. Turnell has long since been gathered to his fathers; but some members of the class survive; and they often refer, with considerable emotion, to the time when Mr. Watson belonged to their fraternity, took his seat among them as "a brother," and appeared

"An easy, free, and but more-knowing friend."

The piety of Mr. Watson's heart was observable in the whole of his conduct; and it gave a richness and force to his correspondence with the missionaries. One specimen has been already given; and the following is of equal value. It was addressed to an excellent young missionary, who had just entered upon his work at Kingston, in Jamaica:—

To the Rev. Robert Young.

London, Oct. 30th, 1821.

DEAR BROTHER,—Your safe arrival, and promising entrance upon your work, give us pleasure. You have entered upon a very important

field of labour; and you will find the following things necessary to keep before you.

1. To speak, preach, and labour, every day, as though it were your last on earth; as though, at the close of it, you were to give up your account to your Saviour.

2. To give part of every day to secret reading of the Scriptures, and earnest closet prayer. We must draw from the fountain, before we can fill the vessels of others.

3. To read something useful in practical and doctrinal divinity, &c, every day. Let not your books remain unused. By a right application of your time you may accomplish this.

4. To take care of your pulpit preparations. It is no reason for carelessness, that you preach to negroes. It requires more care and labour to prepare a plain sermon, clearly explaining important doctrine, and so illustrating it as to be beneficial to the ignorant, than to make a flashy, rhetorical, empty harangue. Let these preparations be fervently prayed over.

5. To converse much in private with your class leaders, and other persons of some standing in the society, in order to promote their Christian knowledge and piety; that they may be props and stays to the society. You must, however, do this with dignity, and without foolish familiarity.

6. To visit the sick as much as possible, and catechise children and adults. These are blessed exercises, and will not fail to be profitable to your own soul, and fruitful to others.

7. To be always *at* your work, and *in* your work, public or private, leaving all common and worldly concerns and conversation to others, who have not your work to do.

8. To act in the full spirit of your instructions, whatever others may do, and endeavour in all your intercourse with your brethren to promote their spirituality and your own by holy converse. Remember to keep and send your journal.

With love to Mrs. Young and the brethren, I am yours truly.

During the autumn of this year Mr. Watson attended missionary meetings at Leeds, Doncaster, Alford, Wainfleet, and Retford, where he pleaded the good cause with encouraging effect, and gladdened the hearts of the people by his eloquence, and statements of past success; and his own spirit was greatly cheered by the displays of Christian zeal and liberality which every where met his view. While he imparted pleasure to others, he suffered greatly from feebleness and disease. In what state of health he prosecuted these labours will partly appear from the following letter, which was addressed to Mrs. Watson:—

Wainfleet, Thursday evening

My Dearest Mary,—Through Divine mercy I have been brought on my journey to this place, and have got through my work, though with difficulty. My lungs have been very tender, and sometimes I have been very feeble; but, upon the whole, I am not worse, and, I think, a little better; and begin to hope that I shall get through all my appointments. At Raithby Hall I have been treated with great tenderness by Mrs. Brackenbury, who has been with me in her car-

riage to all the missionary meetings in the neighbourhood; and taken me back, nursing me with great care. Thank God for these comforts, when they are so welcome. I have been a little low sometimes; but, upon the whole, I have rested on God, and felt that he was with me.

I shall write again, God willing, from Leeds; and, with care, I trust I shall get comfortably through. To-morrow I join the steam packet to Lincoln, and on Saturday go to Retford.

The weather has been mild and beautiful, which has been much in my favour.

My love to the dear children who, I hope, are diligent in their studies. If you write on Monday, I shall get your letter on Wednesday. Do not fail.

May you be kept in health and peace under the protection of our blessed Saviour. Remember me in your prayers. I am yours very truly and ever affectionately.

From the time of his first appointment to London Mr. Watson had occasionally furnished contributions to the Methodist Magazine; and when a new series of that work was commenced, under the very able editorship of Mr. Bunting, in the year 1822, his assistance became still more efficient and regular, especially in the review department, for which he was admirably qualified. He could at once seize upon the argument of an ample volume, and appeared almost intuitively to perceive what was erroneous in principle, or inconclusive in reasoning. The readiness with which he could always express his conceptions often rendered his services of this kind rather an amusement than a labour to himself; while the originality, the strength, the eloquence of his compositions commanded the admiration of all competent judges, and gave to that periodical a more elevated character than it had ever previously possessed. The same kind assistance he continued, as his health and other engagements would allow, to the end of his life.

For several years Mr. Watson's pen had been scarcely ever unemployed; but his publications, though exceedingly valuable in their kind, were mostly single sermons, controversial pamphlets, and missionary reports and periodicals. He had, however, cherished the design of writing something of a more permanent character, and in which his theological knowledge and reading might be brought to bear; and he remarked to his friend Mr. Carr, of Leicester, that he thought the time for entering upon it was now come. His comparative leisure was favourable; and having passed the age of forty years, his mental faculties were matured. He recollected the disadvantages which beset his path, when he first went into a Methodist circuit, and entered upon the study of divinity; he was aware that many of his junior brethren were then in the same circumstances; and he expressed a wish to write something that would assist them in obtaining an accurate and comprehensive acquaintance with the entire system of evangelical truth, and with the evidence upon which every vital doctrine is grounded. After considerable deliberation, he resolved to write a body of Christian theology; and to this work he now devoted all the time which he could command. The success with which he executed this project will appear in the course of this narrative. The

subject is mentioned here, because at this period he entered upon the arduous task which he had assigned to himself. He appears to have formed his plan, and begun to write in the autumn of the year 1821; and in about eighteen months from that period the first part was published.

In the missionary report for the year 1821, which was put into circulation early in the spring of the following year, it is said, "The committee have hitherto had the satisfaction to present their annual report of the state and prospects of the Wesleyan missions, with the most lively feelings of gratitude for past successes, and hope as to the future. These sentiments have suffered no abatement; for never were the committee able to review the proceedings of a year with greater pleasure; and never did prospects more cheering present themselves as incitements to future exertion. To God be all the praise!"

After a minute description of each station occupied by the Wesleyan missionaries in the east, it is said, "Such are the general state and prospects of our missions in Ceylon and continental India; and viewing them in connection with the extensive exertions of other missionary societies, to diffuse the light of evangelical truth through that populous and interesting portion of the globe, the committee cannot refrain from congratulating the friends of missions in general on the animating prospects which present themselves in so many parts of this region of the earth. A very few years ago an almost unbroken mass of pagan darkness hung over the millions of its inhabitants; and scarcely were Christians themselves bold enough to hope that the day of visitation in mercy was at hand. But the seed, sown at first with many tears, is every where springing up, under skies brightening every year with the rays of truth, and watered by dews of the Divine blessing. Inquiry, the great enemy of delusion, has been awakened; many of the educated natives venture both to question and attack, in their conversations and writings, the grossest of the popular superstitions; numerous schools are implanting those principles in the minds of many thousands of the youth, which must unsettle and destroy the prejudices of ages; numerous Christian missionaries, of different denominations, full of faith and love, are daily circulating the holy volume, and preaching its saving truths; and societies of Christians, not in name only, but who have received the grace of God in truth, are now found in different parts of these regions of paganism, and spread around them the illuminations of Divine light. If this has been the result of so short a period, the work, by the blessing of God, must henceforth go on with accelerated activity and success. Already the formidable structure of the superstitions of India nods to its fall."

The report announces the formation of a mission to the natives of New-Holland, whose case is thus described: "The committee sent out a missionary to the aboriginal natives of New-Holland, many of whom roam about in the neighbourhood of the settlements, and have acquired, though imperfectly, the English language. Such an enterprise derives a special interest from the excessive degradation of this branch of the human family. None have sunk so low; and none, therefore, so greatly need the only power which can awaken the torpor of their minds, and conquer their savage habits,—the power of religion; and among none, when thus elevated into men, and restored to God, will the triumphs of

the Gospel be more illustrious. Infidelity may despair of raising the embruted tribes of the fallen race, because it sees not the relations in which they stand to God, their Maker and Redeemer; but the Christian knows that they are both men, and redeemed men; and that those branches of a disobedient family which have wandered into 'a far country,' and have been reduced to the most degrading servitude, shall at length 'come to themselves,' and say, 'I will arise and go to my father.' It is true that in all attempts to benefit such a people, the agents must eminently 'walk by *faith*, and not by *sight*;' yet is the one as certain as the other, when it grounds itself upon the word of God. That word has commanded the Gospel to be 'preached to *every creature*;' and as the natives of New-Holland are thus included in the care of their Saviour, we doubt not this attempt to benefit them will meet with his blessing. The case of these wretched men has been laid upon the hearts of the pious in the colony, and earnest appeals have been made in their behalf, with a view of producing a systematic effort for their religious instruction; and, in consequence, some means have been adopted for that purpose. With those who have thus commenced the benevolent work, the missionary sent out is instructed to co-operate, and to follow any plans which may appear most conducive to the end. His first effort will be among those who lie nearest the settlements, whose children especially he will endeavour to bring under a course of useful and religious instruction. As this will come in aid of the anxious and benevolent attempts of the governor, to extend to them the advantages of civilization, we doubt not but that it will receive his encouragement."

This benevolent project failed for the time, in consequence of the unfaithfulness of the missionary to whom the work was assigned. Instead of pursuing the objects of his mission in the spirit of faith and prayer, and keeping steadily in view the salvation of the people for whose instruction in Christianity he had been solemnly set apart, he contracted a passion for farming; and left the people to perish in ignorance and sin, while he devoted his attention to the breeding of cattle! It is needless to add, that the noble character of a Christian missionary was soon laid aside. The course pursued by this unhappy man gave Mr. Watson no small degree of pain and sorrow.

This report announces the commencement of the mission to New-Zealand, under the direction of Mr. Leigh, who had already visited that region, conversed largely with the natives, and had excited an interest in their favour by the statements which he had made respecting their manners and habits at various public meetings in England. "Special instructions," it is said, "have been given by the committee to the missionaries appointed to New-Zealand, to direct their conduct in a new and trying situation, as far as the probable circumstances in which they may be placed could be anticipated: especially they have been instructed to avoid any interference with the civil affairs of the natives, except to promote their industry and civilization by teaching them useful arts; and a peremptory rule has been enforced upon them, on no account to make use of warlike weapons of any kind, as articles of barter.

"These new enterprises the committee commend to the earnest prayers of the society; that the brethren and their intrepid wives, now

on the great deep, may have 'a prosperous voyage by the will of God;' that they may be preserved from the violence of savage and lawless men, and that a great and effectual door may be opened among the Gentiles, for the reception of that Gospel which will humanize their manners, change their ferocious dispositions, and plant among them the great principles of public justice, peace, and order, and of private and domestic happiness."

In regard to Western Africa, it is said, "A scene more delightful to humanity is scarcely exhibited through the vast extent of the missionary field than the colony of Sierra-Leone. Here the interesting spectacle is presented before the nations of the earth, of a Christian colony calling the attention of the inhabitants of a vast continent, whose commerce has been for ages the flesh and the bones of men, and those men their brethren, to the peaceful arts, and the cultivation of the ground; and opening its friendly shores, and extending its protection and care, to those unhappy negroes who, seized by their own oppressive governments, and purchased by the avarice of Europeans, have been arrested on their voyage by British cruisers, and liberated from their floating prisons. But these triumphs of hallowed power and Christian justice are surmounted by the triumphs of religion. Among these pagan negroes missionaries have most successfully taught the principles of Christianity, and many interesting societies of true Christians have been raised up among a people who, by an overruling Providence, have been rescued from slavery, and brought within a Christian colony. What the ultimate results may be on the spread of religion in Africa, cannot well be estimated; but the effects must be great. The light will not be confined to Sierra-Leone. Those who have obtained mercy will not hide this truth within their hearts; and into those various and distant regions where their affairs may conduct them, they will carry the name and the truth of Christ."

Concerning another part of the African continent it is added, "Every thing in South Africa is hopeful as to those glorious results which form the subjects of the prayers and hopes of the friends of missions, and of this quarter of the globe in particular. Among the interesting circumstances of the missions in that part of the world, is the harmony of affection and effort which exists among the missionaries of different societies. In the past year two or three journeys have been made by some of our own missionaries and those of the London society in connection, for the purpose of exploring the condition of distant tribes, and to search for new fields of difficult labour. A moral scene more truly sublime and impressive can scarcely be contemplated, than a few missionaries of different denominations, rising above the jealousies of mere party, and intent only upon enlarging the boundaries of light and mercy, traversing the dreary desert, cheerfully submitting to heat and cold, weariness and hunger, and joining themselves to the society of men in the lowest state of cultivation, unelevated by intellect, and uncorrected by moral influence, in order to offer them benevolent assistance. Such was the nature of these journeys; and every where access to the heathen was found practicable. The hallowed name of missionary of Jesus Christ had travelled across the desert with honour, and was their introduction to a friendly though rude hospitality. What is more, through what the committee think they have reason to con-

sider the preparing influence of God, those heathen, to whom the face of a white man was a strange sight, earnestly desired the residence of missionaries among them, and an eager desire for Christian instruction. New calls for missionaries are heard from tribes long hidden from the compassionate eye of the Christian Church; and it remains for the religious public to determine, by its subscriptions, whether this call from 'regions beyond,' where Christ is not named, 'Come over and help us,' shall be made in vain. Southern Africa is now presenting its population before the Christianity of this country. Every traveller confirms the account of immense numbers of people totally involved in pagan ignorance and superstition; yet docile; willing to receive the help which may be afforded; and, in some instances, anxiously imploring it. No difficulty exists, but which the heroism of devoted missionaries is ready to surmount; no labours or privations are too severe for them to submit to, in order to accomplish their glorious object. Shall there then be, on the one hand, men willing to carry out the light and consolations of the Gospel, and, on the other, numerous people willing to receive them; and, above all, does this their willingness bear marks of the Divine hand, thus opening a great and an effectual door; and shall 'the messengers of the Churches' be prevented from proclaiming peace on these mountains, and crying to the inhabitants of their valleys, 'Behold your God?' The committee cannot indeed doubt, that additional exertions among the friends of Christ will enable them to support the work begun, and to embrace those new openings and opportunities for the spread of our Divine religion which Africa, now so eminently remembered by her God, presents."

According to this report eleven missionaries, several of whom were married, were sent out by the committee in the course of the year; and the income of the society for the same period was £26,581. 14*s*. 8*d*.; yet it is added, "Notwithstanding the above liberal contributions, which have considerably exceeded those of any former year, the expenditure of the society has been so large as to leave a balance due to the general treasurers, amounting to £7,568. 5*s*. 10*d*.: a large sum, which might create some uneasiness, had not the committee the utmost confidence that this extending work will not be suffered to want that aid which shall not only support it on its present scale, but greatly enlarge it into the dominions of darkness and misery.

"For the liberality of the past year the committee offer their grateful acknowledgments to the friends of the society. To the exertions of the collectors, the officers of the auxiliary and branch societies, and to those ministers who have in so many instances exerted themselves to plead the cause of our Lord and Saviour, and to supply the means of sending forth his everlasting Gospel, their best thanks are due, and are here rendered.

"The interests of the society are again left in their hands, and laid upon their hearts, with all those urgent claims upon their compassion and efforts which have been adverted to. More blessed have they felt it to give than to receive; and like their great Master they have, through his grace, determined 'not to faint, nor be discouraged, till judgment is set in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law.' Many congregations and societies have not yet taken their full share

in this work; but when the appeal is made to them, we doubt not that it will be successful. Every principle acknowledged in the very profession of Christ forbids us to anticipate the contrary; for can it be, that any member of a Christian society, in the full enjoyment of 'all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord,—of all the means of saving health, and consolation, and hope,—can be indifferent to so many millions entirely destitute of all these blessings; and that he should decline to be employed in the work for which his Saviour died and rose again, when in so many ways missionary societies offer to his liberality, his influence, and his efforts, the opportunity of proving the truth of his own Christianity, and, in the highest sense, of blessing his fellow creatures? It cannot be; and if ministers and people make the trial, they will find in every circuit hearts to answer the call, when it is once sounded in the ears of the Churches, and hands to pour into the common fund a cheerful and a constant charity. Again those circuits where societies have not been formed are entreated to come up to our help; and to have confidence in God and his people, that they shall not fail to accomplish the formation and support of important auxiliaries and branches which shall attach the religious societies by which they may be conducted more intimately with the general Church of Christ, and bring upon them that special blessing which is promised to faithful and laborious servants.

"In conclusion we commend all our efforts to the blessing of God. In the spirit of prayer and dependence upon him let every part of this sacred work be conducted; and by the word of God and prayer it shall be sanctified. Whether we labour in private, or on these high occasions assemble in public, ever be it remembered by us, that without him nothing is wise, or strong, or holy. To him be glory in the Church throughout all ages. Amen."

As the spring of this year advanced, and about the time at which this report was published, Mr. Watson visited the principal towns in Cornwall, attended by the Rev. Messrs. Reece and Joseph Taylor, preaching, and attending missionary meetings. He commenced his tour about the middle of February, and returned to London in March. The attendance in all places was exceedingly crowded; the collections at the public services were liberal; and the sums reported, as the contributions of each society, exceeded those of any former year. In some instances the increase was very large. The interest manifested by the vast congregations who assembled to sympathize with the miseries of the heathen world, and to hail the multiplying triumphs of the Gospel, was evidently deep and ardent, and gave an encouraging pledge that the cause of missions would never want warm and liberal friends among the people of Cornwall, who had been among the first to espouse the cause, and whose numerous and spacious places of worship, and large religious societies, were proofs of the efficacy of the Gospel. Such were the sentiments with which Mr. Watson returned from this laborious excursion. He found the Cornish preachers and people of one heart in this blessed work.

On his return from Cornwall he began to prepare for a journey into the north, for the purpose of attending missionary anniversaries at some of the principal towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire; but he was again assailed by disease in a somewhat new form. The following letter

describes his situation with a degree of playfulness, which those persons will well understand who are just recovering from the complaint in question:—

To Mr. William Walton Wakefield.

London, April 1st, 1822.

My Dear Friend,—Two reasons have delayed an answer to your kind letter: first, it arrived when I was in Cornwall; second, that since the day after my return, I have been laid up with the gout; and the attack has been so sharp, that for near three weeks I have been confined to the sofa, not being able to take a step. I am now, however, so rapidly improving, that I begin to feel it a matter of tolerable certainty, that I shall be able to set off on my journey to Manchester at the latter end of the week; or that, at all events, I shall reach Wakefield on the Wednesday before the meeting.

You will probably smile at my having the gout; but so it is; and no pleasant companion, I assure you, though kings and nobles so often make acquaintance with it. My general health, I thank God, is much better.

I shall again be most happy to see my old and beloved friends; and trust that we shall not meet together at the anniversary of your society in vain.

Our accounts from abroad are generally favourable. The work of God appears to his servants, in many parts of the heathen world; and his glory will, we trust, descend upon their children. Sickness and death have, however, made great inroads in many of our stations. We have lost seven missionaries in the West Indies, during the year; and four are disabled in India.

Present my kind regards to Miss Walton, and to Doctor and Mrs. Ellis,—friends always valued,—and to Mr. Woolmer.

CHAPTER XVI.

Mr. Watson's spirit at Missionary Anniversaries—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in 1822—Speech of the Rev. George Collison—Instruction of Missionaries—Letters to Dr. Ellis—Letter to the Rev. Elijah Hoole—Missionary Report for the year 1822—Letter to Dr. Ellis—Mr. Watson publishes the first part of his Theological Institutes—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in 1823—Letter to Dr. Ellis—Letter to Mr. Walton—The Rev. Messrs. Sargent and Lloyd killed on their way to the Conference—Letter to Mr. Walton—Letter to Miss Walton, on the Death of her Sister—Death of the Rev. William Ward—Projected Mission in Palestine—Letter to Dr. M'Allum—The Rev. Charles Cook's Visit to Jerusalem—Mr. Watson writes in Defence of the Witness of the Spirit—His Sermon on "Man Magnified by the Divine Regard"—Letter on Organs in Methodist Chapels.

With Mr. Watson the anniversaries of missionary societies were not seasons of unhallowed levity, but were often connected in his mind with deep and solemn feeling. That so large a portion of the human race remained unevangelized, and that millions of mankind, redeemed and immortal, should be hastening to their final account under all the guilt and corruption of their fallen nature, aggravated by the intellectual

and sensual pollutions of idolatry, appeared to him to call for humiliation and shame on the part of the Christian Church. The cheerfulness therefore which he felt at the sight of old friends, still engaged in the service of God; and the grateful joy which he cherished because of past success, and the displays of Christian liberality which it was often his privilege to witness; were chastened and tempered by the remembrance of past neglects. He was accustomed to pray that those neglects might be forgiven; that God would accept the contributions and services of his people; and that success might attend their future efforts. This spirit he often succeeded in infusing among the people; so that missionary meetings became means of improvement in personal godliness. In announcing the anniversary of the general society, to be held in London in the year 1822, he inserted the following pious suggestions, which were in fact the predominating sentiments of his heart. They appeared in the missionary notices for April. "We beg leave to direct the attention of the friends of our missions in general to the arrangement of the regular services connected with the approaching anniversary of the society. From the general aspect of the accounts received through the year, we hope to meet, to unite with our mutual congratulations our devout thanksgivings to God for the success with which the Lord of the harvest has been pleased to crown the efforts of his labourers, and for those encouragements which are offered for new enterprises for the extension of the kingdom of our Lord to yet unvisited regions of darkness and misery. In these delightful exercises we trust to be joined by many of our friends from different parts of the country. May we all meet in the deep spirit of sympathy for a world of which so great a part is still sitting in darkness, and the shadow of death; and unite in prayers more solemn, earnest, and prevailing, for the larger effusions of that Divine influence which alone can render successful human efforts for the conversion and salvation of the souls of men!"

The anniversary was conducted in that spirit of piety which was anticipated. The following account was written by Mr. Watson himself:—"We are happy to say, that the pleasing anticipations respecting this anniversary, which we were led to express in our number for April, have been fully realized. The friends of the Wesleyan missions have again assembled from various parts of the country, to listen to a report which was eminently calculated to call forth their humble thanksgivings for the encouragements of the past year; and have solemnly renewed, under a more than ordinary influence from above, and with feelings of increased compassion for perishing souls, their pledges of fidelity to his holy cause.

"A public prayer meeting was held at the City-Road chapel, at six o'clock in the morning of the 26th, for the purpose of specially imploring the Divine blessing on the anniversary, and on Christian missions throughout the world. This was found, by the ministers and people who attended it, to be a most edifying and delightful addition to the usual services of the occasion; and we strongly recommend that, wherever it is practicable, a similar meeting should always be included in the arrangements made for the anniversaries of auxiliary societies. We are persuaded that prayer—solemn, fervent, united prayer—is among the most necessary and most powerful of those means by which Christians are now peculiarly called to promote the work and cause of

God; and that, in fact, without an increase in their prayers, in connection with the continuance and augmentation of their pecuniary contributions, the grand object of our common hope and effort, the conversion of THE WORLD, will never be accomplished. We rejoice, therefore, in every indication of a growing spirit of supplication among those who take an active part in missionary institutions."

Mr. Butterworth presided at the annual meeting of the society; the report was read by Mr. Watson; and addresses were delivered by Admiral Lord Gambier; James Stephen, jun., Esq.; Dr. Adam Clarke; J. Herbert Harrington, Esq., from India; Dr. Steinkopff; the Rev. George Collison, of Hackney; the Rev. Samuel Lowel, of Bristol; Lieutenant Gordon; the Rev. George Marsden; the Rev. Henry Moore; the Rev. John James; Francis Marris, Esq., of Manchester; the Rev. Theophilus Blumhardt, of the missionary institution at Basle; James Wood, Esq., of Manchester, and others. There was an incident connected with the speech of Mr. Collison, which is worth recording, as characteristic of the kind and liberal spirit of that excellent man. On the morning of that day Mr. Collison had called on a friend, who informed him that he had recently received property as a residuary legatee; and in looking over the account, he found, to his great regret, that a part of it arose from the sale of slaves, in the Bay of Honduras. "He is too deeply imbued, sir," said Mr. Collison, "with the principles of the Gospel, to receive the price of blood; and he said to me, 'I am shocked at the sight of it. What shall I do with it?' I said, 'I will tell you what you may do with part of it. I am going to the Wesleyan missionary meeting; their labourers are greatly occupied among the slaves.' Since I have been here I have heard with much pleasure, that you have determined on a mission to the very spot, the Bay of Honduras; and I have now the pleasure of presenting the sum, so received from my friend, to forward that desirable purpose. It is upward of seventeen pounds. I wish it were seventeen hundred!"

The subscriptions and donations received at this anniversary amounted to upward of twelve hundred pounds.

When the services connected with the missionary anniversary in London were over, Mr. Watson visited the west of England, where he attended public meetings, and preached missionary sermons at Bristol, Tiverton, and Frome. At each of these places he was received with cordial affection; but that which afforded him the highest gratification was, the spirit of zeal and liberality with which he every where saw the mission cause supported.

One of the important objects to which Mr. Watson directed his attention, after he became one of the resident secretaries to the missionary society, was the theological training of the missionaries preparatory to their entrance upon their foreign work. Some of them resided in his family; and the greater part of them were put upon a course of reading and study under his direction. Among his papers are copious memoranda of lectures in theology, which appear to have been addressed to those interesting young men who from time to time left their native country, under the direction of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, that they might "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." A course of instruction in literature

and general knowledge, was provided for them by different masters, but their theological training was conducted by Mr. Watson himself; and few men were better qualified for the responsible task. The instruction of the missionary candidates, the discharge of his official duties as missionary secretary, occasional attendance upon the anniversaries of missionary societies in the country, and the writing of his great theological work, and supplying articles for the Wesleyan Magazine, occupied the whole of his time; and notwithstanding the general delicacy of his health, and frequent attacks of illness, he went through his various duties and engagements in a manner which was highly honourable to himself, and commanded the admiration of all the parties with whom he was connected. The following letters show the circumstances under which he entered upon the year 1823. They were addressed to his kind friends, Dr. and Mrs. Ellis, late of Hull, but then resident at Wakefield; the doctor having been appointed physician to the county asylum, recently erected near that town. They had pressed him, in his infirm state of health, to pay them a visit, and take up a temporary residence with them.

London, January 4th, 1823.

My Dear Friend,—Your very kind and obliging invitation of a poor invalid has greatly affected me; and I would sooner have said how much I am sensible of your and Mrs. Ellis's friendship, but that my state has been so precarious. I most sincerely thank you.

The complaint itself appears to have been subdued; but the debility which has ensued has been very great; yet I trust that I am in the course of improvement. I am too green to venture on a journey yet, had I not had also another, but slight, attack of the gout in the foot.—This will, I think, be very temporary; and should it please God to raise me to a strength sufficient to travel, in a few weeks, I will accept your kindness, and give myself, by full relaxation, and your advice, and the blessing of God upon both, a chance of full restoration.

Our family afflictions have been increased by a visitation of the scarlet fever. Mary has had a very severe attack, and a little nephew. Whether Tom will escape is doubtful. Mrs. Watson is quite worn down.

In the midst of all we know that all is *right*, and that all is good.—Thank God for the consolation!

I will write to you a week before I set off, which I take will not be this month. The sooner the better I believe for myself; but I must get my gouty foot into something like coach trim.

Wishing you, with the new year, renewed and multiplied blessings, I am, dear sir, yours most obliged and truly.

P. S. I have long had a kind of feeling that the warm bath would, under judicious regulation, be of great service to me. Perhaps you will be kind enough to think of that against I have the pleasure to see you. Mrs. Watson unites in love and thanks.

To the Same.

London, Jan. 27th, 1823.

My Dear Friends,—The severity of the weather would alone prevent you from expecting me to fulfil my own purpose, and to meet

your friendly invitation, in visiting Wakefield. Had it been otherwise, I have not, however, been movable to so great a distance. Till the last fortnight my debility increased; and I certainly was never brought so low in my life. Since then I have been under the tonic and restorative process; and, with now and then a slip back, have been improving.

I trust that in this affliction I have learned something, though slow of heart to understand and to believe. The complaint, as you know, is accompanied with no small degree of pressure on the spirits. I, at least, have found it so. I have thought of dying, and leaving my family at a crisis when they seemed most to need me; or of living a poor, helpless invalid, in the poverty and neglect of a supernumerary preacher; and many more of these saddening reflections have crowded in at different times. But to feel in the midst of every *sinking*, that you could set your foot upon a *rock*, and stand secure, this is the privilege of *faith;* and, I thank God, I have it. However, I trust that something brighter is opening; and that, with great care, I shall be efficient, in a tolerable degree, a few years longer; and live only for what life is worth,—to acquire a deeper acquaintance with God, and to be useful to men.

I feel it a relief to be able to read and write. I am getting on with my new publication, and hope to have the first part from the press in March or April.

I thought I ought to inform you how I was going on, lest you should think I neglected your kind invitation; and this must be my apology for a letter on that very poor subject—*self*. I hope to be able to accomplish the journey to Wakefield when the weather becomes more mild and settled, and when I have got up the hill a little farther. At present I do not go out; nor have I left the house for the last six weeks.

Mr. Garbutt, our mutual friend, called last week, and spent an evening; and we had the pleasure of talking about you and Mrs. Ellis, with mutual feelings of respect and affection.

With kind regards to Mrs. Ellis and your son, and Mr. and Miss Walton, &c, &c.

To the Same.

London, February 11*th*, 1823.

My Dear Friend,—I write in a state of mortification, at a disappointment. My medical attendants have declared against my going northward in my present state of debility, and have ordered me to Brighton, to perfect what, I thank God, is a state of *slowly* returning strength. The missionary committee took up the subject, and backed them; and in vain I urged that, though the air might be cooler, yet the friends I should visit were warmer, and that the inward enjoyment would make up all. To Brighton, therefore, I am driven; and my place is taken for to-morrow. However, the kind invitation of my dear friends will not lose its impression upon my mind and heart; and some time in the spring I hope (less an invalid than now) to spend a week with you. This I shall make an object; as I must, if possible, go down to Nottingham on business before June.

I thank God for the *prospect* of better health than before my attack: at least there are very favourable indications of it.

With best wishes and prayers, and with very grateful feelings to you and Mrs. Ellis, &c, &c.

Under the pressure of severe personal suffering, Mr. Watson kept up a regular correspondence with the missionaries abroad, giving them advice and encouragement as the case of each might require. Some admirable specimens of his letters to the men who were teaching the heathen Christianity in foreign climes have already been given. The following was written at this period, and was addressed

To the Rev. Elijah Hoole, at Madras.

London, Jan. 29th, 1823.

My Dear Brother,—We do not hear from you as often as we could wish; but we are very happy to hear of your health, your successful study of Tamul, and your pleasure in your work.

With respect to the first of these, be careful. Some need the spur, and others the rein. You, I believe, are of the latter and more honourable class. Mingle exercise with study; pursue nothing to great weariness; and be attentive to early rest and early rising. If you will make haste, make haste *slowly*, as ancient wisdom has taught us both in Greek and Latin. You will work better and longer.

You feel, I doubt not, the pleasure and profit of Madras; but when Mr. England arrives, we really think you ought to lay hold fully and finally of Scringapatam; and let it no longer be trifled with. It is certainly to be preferred to Bangalore; because the missionary may be working, while he is gaining the language; and when Bangalore can be occupied by another, a regular exchange may take place.—Suppose a good native assistant could be got from the north of Ceylon to go with you, it might be of service; unless that kind of help can be more usefully employed at Negapatam, to push out the work into the neighbourhood. The people of the old Danish mission, who are in some state of preparation, will, I hope, be gathered in by us: I mean, those of them who are "as sheep having no shepherd."

We have not much English news. The reports will, I hope, be ready for Mr. England to take with him. The connection is at peace, and generally, I think, in prosperity. To God be the praise!

P. S. It may encourage you all to learn, that not only do our funds increase, as you will see by the report, but that we have reason to conclude that missionaries and their work are more constantly and earnestly prayed for. Praying missionaries abroad, and a praying people at home, this is what we want more perfectly. May God pour the Spirit of grace and supplication upon us every where!

A few weeks after this letter was written, the annual report, to which it refers, made its appearance. Its important details are thus introduced:—

"The committee have had to struggle with financial difficulties; and unlooked-for visitations of sickness and death among the missionaries, on various stations, have occurred; but, in the midst of all, they have the happiness to report the general prosperity, or promise, of the great work which was committed to their superintendence.

"Since the publication of the last report of the society, the following missionaries have been sent out to different parts of the world:—

"Mr. White, and Mr. and Mrs. Turner, to New-Zealand; Mr. Powell, to St. Vincent's; and Mr. Edmondson, to Grenada.

"The number of persons in religious society, in the different foreign stations, is twenty-nine thousand seven hundred and fifty-eight; being an increase in the year of one thousand and eighty members. The number of missionaries employed by the society, exclusive of catechists, but including several native assistants, is one hundred and fifty-two."

The income of the society for the year is stated to be £31,748. 9*s.* 11*d.*

Mr. Watson's health continued in a very infirm state through the winter; but as the spring approached, he speaks of himself as convalescent, and meditated a journey into Yorkshire. Thus he writes to his friend:—

To William Ellis M. D., Wakefield.

London, April 1st, 1823.

My Dear Friend,—Being, by Divine mercy, so far restored, that I can do a little work, though I dare not enterprise much, I will endeavour to meet your wishes to attend the missionary service at Wakefield, in connection with Nottingham. I can take a Sunday evening service, if I only remain as well as I am at present; and I hope for increasing strength.

I was sorry to hear of your and Mrs. Ellis's indisposition, which I hope is but temporary; and that, among all your visitations, your *toes* may escape; for inability to walk would be as inconvenient to you as to me. Mine are very tender; and I never walked so *carefully*, I assure you.

In the best things we can have no let or hinderance but what is voluntary; and it is wonderful power given to man, to *command* a "peace which passeth understanding;" "glory, honour, and immortality!" How much better has God dealt with us than we should have dealt with ourselves! *We* would have at our *command* health, friends, power, wealth: but God has subjected them to other laws than blind human will and desire; and has, in return, said, as to all that concerns our true happiness, glory, wealth, and pleasure, "Ask, and it *shall* be given you." May we rightly *estimate* and *employ* this great prerogative attached to redeemed human nature!

My kind regards to Mrs. Ellis, your son, and to our common friends, Mr. and Miss Walton.

In the spring of the year 1823 the first part of the work in which Mr. Watson had for some time been engaged made its appearance, under the title of "Theological Institutes: or, a View of the Evidences, Doctrines, Morals, and Institutions of Christianity." It is appropriately inscribed to the Rev. Jabez Bunting, A. M., "as a small expression of respect for his talents and virtues, and of the value placed upon his friendship by the author." The friendship subsisting between these eminent men was deep and cordial, founded upon mutual esteem.—Their views on nearly all the great questions of theology and Church

order were in unison with each other; and they had long been intimately connected in the missionary cause. The influence which they unitedly exerted upon the Methodist body was powerful and salutary; and their names will be transmitted to posterity in honourable connection.

A modest advertisement prefixed to the work states, that its design is, "to exhibit the evidences, doctrines, morals, and institutions of Christianity, in a form adapted to the use of young ministers, and students in divinity. It is hoped, also, that it may supply the desideratum of a body of divinity, adapted to the present state of theological literature, neither Calvinistic on the one hand, nor Pelagian on the other. The reader will perceive that the object has been to follow a course of plain and close argument on the various subjects discussed, without any attempts at embellishment of style, and without adding practical uses and reflections, which, however important, did not fall within his plan to introduce. The various controversies on fundamental and important points have been introduced; but it has been the sincere aim of the author to discuss every point with fairness and candour; honestly, but in the spirit of 'the truth,' which he more anxiously wishes to be taught than to teach, to exhibit what he believes to be the sense of the Holy Scriptures, to whose authority he trusts he has unreservedly subjected all his own opinions."

This advertisement relates to the entire publication, and very correctly points out its peculiar characteristics. The principal "controversies" introduced, and of which it contains a copious discussion, are the Deistical, the Socinian, and the Calvinistic. The imagination of the author is placed under absolute control; and the rhetorical embellishment which marks his other writings is never suffered to appear, as being unsuited to the didactic and argumentative character of the work. On all doctrinal questions an absolute deference is paid to the authority of Scripture; and while he contends for the tenet of general redemption, and that of the unnecessitated agency of man, he maintains, as strongly as the most rigid predestinarian, the entire corruption of human nature, and the consequent necessity of Divine influence. In this course he follows the path marked out by the pious and learned Arminius, from whom he selected the motto which he placed upon his title page.

As it was the author's design to exhibit the true sense of the sacred Scriptures, on the leading topics of Christian theology, his first business is to establish the Divine authority of those writings to which he makes his appeal, and to which he requires every opinion to be subordinated. To this subject he confines his attention in the first part. It is divided into twenty chapters; and treats of the moral agency of man;—the rule which determines the quality of moral actions;—presumptions of a direct revelation, from the weakness and corruption of human reason, and the want of authority in merely human opinions;—the origin of those truths which are found in the writings and religious systems of the heathen;—the necessity of revelation, as proved by the state of religious knowledge and of morals among the heathen;—the evidences necessary to authenticate a revelation;—the use and limitation of reason in religion;—the antiquity of the Scriptures;—their uncorrupted preservation;—the credibility of the testimony of the

sacred writers;—the miracles of Scripture;—the prophecies of Scripture;—the internal evidence of the truth of Scripture;—and of various objections. On many of these subjects Mr. Watson, as might be expected, has availed himself of the able writings of the principal apologists of revelation; but his work is far from being a compilation. It is distinguished throughout by great originality, and force of reasoning. A subordinate place is justly assigned to what is called the internal evidence of Christianity; and the author rests his cause mainly upon prophecy and miracles, concerning which his thoughts are striking and profound. The historical argument, also, founded upon the state of the heathen in all ages and nations, is well brought out and sustained; and considerable research is displayed in its elucidation. The paragraph with which this part concludes is very characteristic; and is fully warranted by the preceding argumentation.

"Such are the leading evidences of the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and of the religious system which they unfold, from the first promise made to the first fallen man, to its perfected exhibition in the New Testament. The Christian will review these solid and immovable foundations of his faith with unutterable joy. They leave none of his moral interests unprovided for in time; they set before him a certain and a felicitous immortality. The skeptic and the infidel may be entreated, by every compassionate feeling, to a more serious consideration of the evidences of this Divine system, and the difficulties and hopelessness of their own; and they ought to be reminded in the words of a modern writer, 'If Christianity be true, it is *tremendously* true.'—Let them turn to an insulted, but yet a merciful, Saviour, who even now prays for his blasphemers, in the words he once addressed to Heaven in behalf of his murderers, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'"

This work was remarkably well received; a second edition was soon called for; and it served to establish the character which the writer had previously acquired, as an able divine and a profound reasoner. The remainder of the work was looked for, in various quarters, with considerable eagerness. Had it been generally known, that a great part of it was written under severe bodily suffering, and in a state of extreme languor and exhaustion, the public impression of Mr. Watson's mental vigour would have been still stronger and more just.

Mr. Watson's very infirm state of health, during the spring of this year, rendered him unable to afford that assistance at the anniversaries of the different missionary societies in the country, to which he had long been accustomed. His place, however, was supplied by able and faithful men; and the cause of Christ in the heathen world was supported with increased liberality. Mr. Newton made the annual tour of Cornwall; and Mr. Watson's esteemed colleagues in the secretaryship attended several of the public meetings in the north.

The anniversary of the parent society was held in London early in May. Mr. Watson prepared the report, and was assisted in the reading of it by Mr. Bunting. The following is Mr. Watson's account of this sacred festival:—"The anniversary of this society appears to excite increasing interest every succeeding year; and the attendance of friends from all parts of the kingdom, on that important occasion,

affords a most gratifying proof that the miseries of the heathen still excite the tenderest sympathy of the Wesleyan connection. While so many persons are ready to make a generous sacrifice of personal ease and convenience, in order that they may participate in the triumphs of this society, and renew their pledges of attachment to the sacred cause of Christian missions, no doubt can be entertained but that the evangelization of the world will proceed with increasing rapidity and power. At seven o'clock in the morning of the first of May, a public prayer meeting was held in the City-Road chapel, to implore the blessing of Almighty God upon the general meeting, and the religious services connected with it. Notwithstanding the early hour at which this meeting was held, it was very numerously attended, and the heavenly influence which rested upon the congregation was generally regarded as 'a token for good.' The cause of missions is eminently the cause of God; and, though carried on by human instrumentality, is essentially dependent upon the Divine blessing in every stage of its progress: and that blessing should be implored in devout and fervent prayer. The congregational collections exceeded those of any former year by upward of one hundred pounds."

The public meeting was attended by Sir George Rose and Mr. Wilberforce; and the former of these gentlemen not only patronized the society, but in the house of commons spoke strongly in favour of its operations and character. About the same time he also published a pamphlet in defence of the West India mission; and employed the society's missionaries in the instruction of his own slaves in the island of Jamaica.

Soon after this anniversary the treasurers received a legacy under peculiar circumstances; which are worthy of permanent record, as illustrating the effects of religion in the character of a man once in very humble life. It is thus described by Mr. Watson:—"The committee have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of fifty pounds, left by the will of Mr. Thomas Mann, late a waterman of the precinct of St. Catherine by the tower, London, paid by his executor and nephew, Mr. Thomas John Crockford. The late Mr. Mann was a working waterman, called a scullerman, in a common boat on the Thames, and, by his unwearied industry and habits of frugality, had acquired considerable property. But he was always a generous man. Whenever he knew of a poor waterman, or other person, in distress, he readily gave him relief. After his father's death he supported his mother and sisters by his industry. He was a truly pious and consistent character. In the early part of his life he attended the ministry of Mr. Romaine, Mr. Newton, Mr. Wesley, and other eminent persons. He has left liberal legacies to the different missionary and other religious societies, beside a handsome sum to his relations. His character was so well known on the river, that he had acquired the name of 'the honest waterman.' He died at the advanced age of seventy-six."

Mr. Watson attended the conference this year, which was held in Sheffield; and from this place he addressed the following letters to his friends in Wakefield:—

To William Ellis, M. D.

Sheffield, Tuesday evening.

My Dear Friend,—I take the opportunity of the return of our amiable and common friends, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Holdsworth, to say,

1. That I know not whether I replied to your last or not; but,

2. If I did not, my heart replies to every kind sentiment it contains: and, to be in the professional style of first, second, and third,

3. That I purposed most fully to have seen you before I came here, but have been most provokingly hindered hitherto. However, I fully purpose to explain to you why I did not sooner afford myself that gratification when I see you. In the meantime, suffice it to say, in due order and method,

1. That in March the doctors interfered,

2. That in May, when I had laid aside a week, an attack of gout in my knee kept me three weeks in Devonshire, contemplating its beauties from a sofa, through an opening of four feet between the houses opposite; and rendered it impossible, from the accumulation of business, for me to leave town long before conference.

3. I nevertheless designated three days for that purpose; when special business detained me; so that I arrived here only on Saturday night.

But what if I should reach Wakefield next Saturday, snugly, and without telling any body? Perhaps I may, and remain till Monday.—In that case, though I hope to enjoy as much of your and Mrs. Ellis's company, as if I were at your house; yet, as my maxim is, not to leave the house of my oldest host in any place, I should resort to my old and respected friend Mr. Walton, as my home; knowing, too, that your intimacy there would make little difference in the quantum of your society; and I would not for the world grieve in the least my venerable friend.

Hoping then to see you, either then, or during the conference, I will not farther, "with pen and ink, write to you;" but only use those instruments to say, that, with affectionate remembrance to Mrs. Ellis, I am yours most truly.

P. S. Please say to Mr. Walton, that I shall write to him to-morrow, to say who is the president, &c. Present also my kind regards to Miss Walton.

To Mr. William Walton, Wakefield.

Sheffield, Wednesday morning.

My Dear Sir,—I had intended to call at Wakefield, and have the pleasure of once more seeing you, in a kind of round-about way to the conference; but some special affairs prevented me. However, I hope to see you, perhaps on Saturday, should all be well; and though I have other invitations, I shall not leave your kind and hospitable roof, if it be convenient for you to give me a bed. I assure you long absence has not diminished my regards for yourself and family; and to see you will give me the greatest pleasure. Perhaps you will be glad to hear a little conference news, though as yet we have but little. Mr. Moore was chosen president; and we have just got to business.

I know not whether you have heard of the overturn of the Huddersfield coach, with several preachers. Mr. Sargent and Mr. Lloyd are the only persons who are seriously hurt. The conference sent Dr. Taft to visit them. He found them in cottages by the road side; and states that they are more likely to die than live. Mr. Sargent is suffering from concussion of the brain; and it is doubtful whether or not his spine is hurt. Lloyd is hurt in the kidneys, and inflammation has followed. Their afflicted wives are with them, and their sufferings will be assuaged by every human attention. May God preserve and raise them up! It is an awful providence. All the other preachers have arrived safe.

I thank God, my health is much recovered; though I feel the fatigues of the confinement of the committees we have had, penned up in a close vestry, and breathing bad air. I hoped to have left London, but they have kept me another year. My own will is not gratified in this; but I wish to be only where my brethren judge I may be the most useful.

Give my kind regards to Miss Walton, and to Dr. and Mrs. Ellis.

The apprehensions respecting Messrs. Sargent and Lloyd, which are here expressed, were unhappily realized. They both expired in a few days. Mr. Sargent never recovered his recollection, his brain being injured by the fall. Mr. Lloyd, a young man of superior talents and acquirements, died in a manner the most peaceful and triumphant. Under torturing pain, and when all hope of recovery was gone, he was so strengthened by the consolations of the Holy Spirit, as to shout aloud the praises of God, and rejoice in hope of future glory. An interesting account of him, and of his fellow sufferer, was published in the Wesleyan Magazine in the course of the following year.

While Mr. Watson's mind was greatly affected by the sudden removal of these esteemed brethren, his sympathies were strongly excited by a letter from his friend Mr. Walton, informing him of the death of his youngest daughter. She had been happily married for a little while to a gentleman of the name of Milner, whom she had accompanied to Genoa; and the distressing intelligence had just arrived that she was no more. She was at once intelligent, amiable, and pious; and her death occasioned exquisite sorrow in the family. Mr. Watson, who had known and esteemed her, and was strongly attached to the survivors, addressed the following letters to the bereaved, in which he poured forth the kindest and most tender and generous feelings:—

To Mr. William Walton, Wakefield.

Sheffield, Friday morning.

My Dear Friend,—I received your affecting letter this morning; and I again mingle my sympathies with yours, in the loss of your amiable daughter, for whom I had a very affectionate regard. I could recall to your remembrance and to my own, her simplicity and kindness, and excellence of character; but that would only awaken your feelings, and remind me too strongly of the many happy hours which I have spent under your roof before her removal from home. I afterward felt much for her; and admired the calmness with which she sustained many anxious and unsettled circumstances. But, my dear friend, this is your

satisfaction and comfort, that your valued daughter knew how to cast her care on God; and that while every thing was done for her when separated from the friends she so much loved, she had in her last sickness the light and comfort of the Divine presence, and the cheering hope of that better world, where separations shall be unknown, and where pain and sorrow shall be for ever excluded.

Affection naturally wishes to be present at the closing scene, and to watch the escape of the loved spirits, whom our love would still retain on earth. But there is no doubt that you and Miss Walton were spared that trial in wisdom and in mercy. You have now the news of the conflict and the victory together; and you are called at once to contemplate the falling of the earthly tenement, and the freed spirit exulting over the frailty of mortality, and already in the joy of its Lord. Thus your wound and your healing, your affliction and your consolation, have visited you hand in hand. You "sing of judgment and of mercy;" mercy tender, saving, and everlasting. So you feel it; and in you may this consolation abound yet more and more!

How much we owe to the blessed Gospel! "God is love!" What a testimony is this! Love to all, and love in every thing; love when he chastises, and love when he hides himself behind dark dispensations. Here is the ground of a firm faith. This painful affliction was in love to the dear departed saint, whose loss we deplore; love to you, her tenderest relative; love to Mary, who was joined to her in sisterly affection, and constant friendship; love to all who knew her excellent character. The lesson of our mortality is repeated; the picture of a calm and peaceful death is again presented; the end for which we ought to live, and pray, and watch, and labour. For you, my dear friend, another part of your family is in heaven, among the glorified; safe and happy for ever. Your heart will therefore be more strongly attracted to that blessed world; you will feel a richer interest in that heavenly inheritance; your future journey will be cheered by the hope of joining them who are gone before; and O may the blissful assurance of meeting those we love on earth in the glory and smile of our Divine Lord, be our merciful lot when our heart shall fail!

Poor Lloyd, you will have heard, is gone, and his wife is twice a widow.

I thank God, I continue pretty well. It would give me great pleasure to visit Wakefield again before I return; but I must deny myself that pleasure, great as it would be. If the conference break up on Monday, I propose returning on Tuesday.

My affectionate regards to Miss Walton, and best wishes.

P. S. I will think of your proposal to write the substance of the sermon If I can, I will

The following letter was addressed, at the same time, to Miss Walton, the friend and solace of her revered father:—

August 8th, 1823.

My Dear Mary,—Your father's letter, containing some particulars of the death of your dear sister, greatly affected me. I could not but think of former days, when I read of her favourite walks, and botanizing excursions; her taste for the calm and rich beauties of rural scenery, and her choice of a tomb where a quiet should be thrown around,

emblematical of her own character, and amidst those pure scenes of nature, to which the purity of her own spirit most feelingly attached itself. All this was touching to my own heart, as it was characteristic of hers. I felt, too, how strongly this part of the communication would appeal to your feelings, and call up many, many tender remembrances. Your tears have been again called forth; and mine have this morning mingled with them.

But, above all, her death was as we might expect it to be; and for this, you, my dear friend, are called, with your beloved father, to give thanks to God, who hath given her the victory; and to comfort your heart with those blessed words of hope, "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." "Not lost, but gone before."

Mournfully tender is the memory of past friendships and past joys; but ours is the world of change. Its name is *earth;* and that explains the whole. Well, let it roll, if we keep fast our hold on heaven; and if, when we pass away from its changeful scenes, and itself shall flee away from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne, we are found for ever with the Lord;—

> "Then in their bright results shall rise,
> Thoughts, virtues, friendships, griefs, and joys."

I need not, I hope, assure you, that for you and your departed Ann, I felt for many years an affectionate respect. She has left us: but you remain; and I trust will long remain the solace of your venerable father, and the object of the regard of your friends;—and you have many. If you can set any value upon a friendship so poor as mine, and of so little consequence to any one, you have it in every degree you can wish. My prayer is that this bereavement may be to you and to myself the means of leading us to a nearer walk with God, and a greater meetness for that world where we shall meet again. Let it lead us to consecrate ourselves anew to God, and his service; that in that immortal state we may be associated with all we have known and loved on earth, and enjoy that hallowed friendship which in this state has so many imperfections, and must suffer so many interruptions.

I cannot add more. My feelings you know. I had once hoped to see you again before I left Yorkshire; but I must deny myself that happiness. My health is better; but the future is known only to God. We are in his hands; but wherever I am, be assured that I am as ever,

Your most affectionate friend.

On his return from the conference Mr. Watson received the melancholy tidings of the death of Mr. Ward, of the Baptist mission at Serampore, whose recent visit to England had made so deep and beneficial an impression upon the minds of Christians in general. The following tribute to the memory of that distinguished missionary he drew up, and inserted in the missionary notices for September:—"We deeply regret to have received information of the death of the Rev. William Ward, after a short illness, of cholera morbus; a disease which has committed the most awful ravages in India for several years past. The Church of God, and the cause of missions, have sustained a heavy loss in the death of Mr. Ward; but amidst the regrets of the Christian world, at

the removal of this eminent missionary, there is this cause of great thankfulness, that by his long labours in India he was honoured to be one of those instruments by which the word of God has been so largely translated into the different languages of India, and the foundations of Christianity in that populous and idolatrous part of the world have been firmly laid. Mr. Ward's visit to this country tended also greatly to serve the same cause by the affecting pictures he presented, in his sermons and public addresses, as to the true character of Hindoo paganism, and the forcible manner in which he impressed upon Christians of all denominations the necessity of the special influences of the Holy Spirit, in order to the success of missions, and of earnest and persevering prayers for their effusion upon the world. In answer to such prayers we trust that other equally qualified labourers will be sent forth by the Lord of the harvest, to enter upon and extend the evangelical and exemplary labours of those whom God has called to their eternal reward; and to reap the harvest which shall spring from the seed sown by them, in the different regions of the eastern world."

In the autumn of this year Mr. Watson addressed the following letter to the Rev. Dr. M'Allum, on the interesting subject of a Wesleyan mission to the Holy Land; a measure which had been long contemplated, and in favour of which several subscriptions had been presented:—

To the Rev. Daniel M'Allum, M. D.

London, Sept. 19th, 1823.

Dear Sir,—I write to you on a subject of great importance; and one on which I trust you will make no attempt to say *No*, until you have asked counsel of God, and your best feelings.

You know that a mission to Jerusalem is before the committee, and something must be done with reference to that object. It is forced upon us by the prayers of the pious, and the contributions of the generous. We have never put it forward to excite interest; and yet we are constantly getting money with this designation.

Our view is, that a mission house should be taken, and a family settled there; and that two missionaries be appointed, one married and the other single. Much might be done by conversation, and circulating the Scriptures, &c, in the first place, and by *public* family worship. The rest must follow as the Lord may open the door. We think it likely, too, that the countries beyond may open; in which case the house at Jerusalem might become the centre of a distinct class of missions, and the school in which the labourers might be trained for service, or sent out from England.

But who will go, and head this great work, looking forward to Syria and Lesser Asia, and backward upon the Euphrates and Armenia, as scenes to which his labours may extend; though not personally, yet by commencing the work in Palestine, the very centre of intelligence, and by training up the agents there? How noble a scene of useful labour! And the sacrifices are not great. Jerusalem is healthy; protection can be obtained; the journey from England is short; intercourse with friends regular; and a trip to England every few years quite practicable.

But for such a mission we as a body have a very limited choice of

men; who ought to be literary; and, in addition, ought, in order to have the best chance of favour, &c, among the principal men, to know medicine and surgery.

We lay this matter before you, in the name of the Lord, at least to go on an exploring excursion, before you make up your mind fully to give yourself to the work. You might go with Mr. Cook, from France, or some other suitable person, to Jerusalem and report; or if you will at once, in the name of Him whose blessed footsteps trod that soil, offer yourself to make the attempt to settle at once in Jerusalem, and put the practicability of a mission there to the test, take your excellent wife, and we will give you the best brother we can find to help you. The time of your stay may be left with yourself. The Italian language might help you sufficiently at the first; and modern Greek and Arabic may be acquired there. We have no other person to head such a mission, to whom we can look. Think, pray, and write as soon as you have determined at least to make farther inquiries.

The God who has never forgotten Jerusalem direct you! There are ten thousand Jews resident there, and not highly prejudiced; many are respectable; there are many amiable daughters of Zion, with whom your wife can form a pleasant society; and several Christian missionaries of the first order, &c, &c. I speak the words of truth and soberness.

Give my love to Mrs. M'Allum. Let her remember Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, the family whom Jesus loved; and put no difficulty in the way of another family residing there in the same place, whom Jesus may also love, and to whom he will pay many special visits of mercy.

P. S. In all these sentiments Mr. Taylor joins me.

For some reasons, with which we are not acquainted, Dr. M'Allum declined the service here proposed to him; and the Rev. Charles Cook, of the French mission, was requested to visit that interesting country, and report to the committee the facilities that might exist for establishing a mission at Jerusalem, or any part of Palestine.

In reporting this preparatory measure, Mr. Watson says, "One or two missionaries are already there; and it has been found easy to distribute the Scriptures, and to bring into instructive conversation many of that varied concourse of people who, from different parts of the world, are constantly 'flowing,' to use the language of Scripture, to this sacred place. In this work many more missionaries may be usefully employed; and Jerusalem will probably be the central point from which the agents of the different societies will ultimately send forth missions in various directions into the neighbouring countries, as Divine Providence may open the door. We commend our respected brother, and his important undertaking, to the prayers of our friends.

"Should a promising opening for the establishment of an efficient mission present itself to Mr. Cook, a supply of missionaries must, of course, be sent; and we take this opportunity of directing the attention of those young men in whose hearts it is to offer themselves for this service of Christ in this and other Mohammedan countries, as Providence may open the way, to the necessity of directing their studies and inquiries into a channel which may specially qualify them

for such stations, and particularly to the Arabic language. The time and application necessary to make a respectable proficiency in this attainment render it necessary that the earliest opportunity should be seized for its commencement."

During the greater part of the year 1823 Mr. Watson was either severely afflicted, or in such a state of debility and exhaustion, as to be scarcely able to travel, and to attend missionary meetings in the country; and his time was therefore mostly spent in the mission house and in his own room. His powerful and active mind, however, rose above every infirmity, and was constantly employed in useful study; and when he could sit at his desk, his pen was seldom idle. The approbation with which his "Theological Institutes" was received urged him on to the completion of that work; and the Wesleyan Magazine this year was greatly enriched by his communications. He wrote some valuable papers on that direct witness which is borne by the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of believers, to the fact of their personal adoption. The reality of this witness was generally held by Protestant divines in some former ages; but it is now regarded by many as a mere peculiarity of Methodism. In this light it was viewed by Mr. Southey, in his "Life of Wesley;" and Mr. Watson, in his reply, has shown that this great blessing of Christianity is distinctly recognized in the writings of the highest authorities in the Church of England. It is a remarkable fact, to which Mr. Watson has not adverted, that for more than half a century, under the reign of Elizabeth, and of the first James and Charles, there were bound up with the larger editions of the English Bible certain prayers for the use of individuals and families, printed by the regular authorities, the king's printers and the two English universities; and with those prayers was connected, "The Confession of the Christian Faith." In this document the devout Christian is taught to say, "I believe and confess the Holy Ghost, God equal with the Father and the Son, who regenerateth and sanctifieth us, ruleth and guideth us into all truth, PERSUADING MOST ASSUREDLY IN OUR CONSCIENCES THAT WE BE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, brethren to Jesus Christ, and fellow heirs with him of life everlasting." An attempt being made by some anonymous correspondents of the editor of the Wesleyan Magazine to confine this office of the Holy Spirit within much narrower limits than is warranted by the sacred writers, Mr. Watson enters somewhat largely into the question, and shows its direct bearing upon the entire system of experimental and practical religion. The papers were read with great interest at the time, and possess a permanent value. Mr. Watson contends, that "we must first be persuaded of God's pardoning love to us, personally, before we can, in the Scriptural sense, love God; and that such a persuasion is therefore a prerequisite to what is properly termed Christian holiness." This is the view taken of the subject by Mr. Wesley, and is fully borne out by the phraseology of Holy Scripture, and the constitution of the human mind. We cannot love God, so as to delight in him as our supreme good, while we conceive ourselves to be the objects of his wrath. In this case he is rather an object of our fear and dread, than of our delight and grateful love; and yet this love is the principle of all holiness and acceptable obedience. The theory therefore which requires men to ascertain the fact of their personal acceptance with

God from the actual conformity of their temper and conduct to the precepts of the Gospel, is directly calculated to produce a "spirit of bondage unto fear," rather than that filial disposition which characterized the Christians of the apostolic age, and which is indeed the believer's "strength."

On this subject Mr. Watson's convictions were very deep. He often referred to it both in his ministry and writings, and laid great and just stress upon it in the examination of missionary candidates. Thus he speaks concerning it in one of his published sermons; in which he censures that philosophical Christianity which has become fashionable in modern times, and which many persons have mistaken for the Christianity of the New Testament. "It allows," says he, "that there is a witness of the Spirit to our adoption; but then this Spirit, we are told, is nothing more than the Spirit in the word, who has there described the moral characters of those who are the children of God; and that it is by comparing our own moral state with those recorded characteristics, that we are to apply his general testimony to ourselves.

"We deny not that there is a testimony of the Spirit in the word as to the true character of all who are the children of God; but then one of these characters is love to God as a Father, which I can never feel until by some means I know that he is not only the common Father of mankind, but my Father reconciled; and of this I must be persuaded before I can apply the rule. I am set, therefore, upon this impossible task, to infer from a general description of the moral character of the children of God, what has passed *in the mind of God*, as to my personal justification; and to discover in my own heart love to God as reconciled to me, while I have a trembling fear of him as a Judge. No; it is the Holy Spirit that 'knoweth the mind of God,' which 'no man knoweth;' and his clearly revealed office is to show us, by his own direct impression upon the heart, what God has decided on the matter of our personal pardon; and hence we are taught, not that the Spirit, as having inspired the written word which lays down authoritatively the terms of pardon to all, enables us to infer our adoption; but that 'the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God;' and that he thus 'abides with us' as 'the Comforter.'"

The excellent papers on the witness of the Spirit were not the only articles supplied by Mr. Watson to the Magazine in the course of this year. He also furnished an admirable sermon, under the title of "Man magnified by the Divine Regard," in which are contained some of the noblest views of human nature ever presented to the minds of men. They form a perfect contrast to the wretched and grovelling principles of infidelity and materialism; systems which separate man from his Creator, deprive him of religion and immortality, and leave him to live and die without either dignity, happiness, or hope. Mr. Watson shows, in a strain of beautiful and impressive eloquence, how greatly God has magnified man by the communication of an intellectual and moral nature; by the constant and merciful care of his providence; and especially by redemption, with its rich and endless train of spiritual blessings both in earth and heaven.

Reference has been already made to Mr. Watson's fine taste in sacred music. Of his judgment in this science his friends were fully aware: and especially in reference to congregational singing. The

Methodists in Wakefield, having for some time been dissatisfied with the manner in which this part of Divine worship was conducted among themselves, meditated the erection of an organ in their chapel; and some time about the end of the year 1823 solicited his opinion and counsel on this measure. In answer to their inquiries he addressed to them the following letter, the principles of which are of deep and general importance. The letter is not dated; and the name of the person to whom it was sent does not appear:—

London, Monday.

Dear Sir,—I am unable to say any thing but what is exceedingly obvious, in the case of the introduction of organs into our chapels; and I think the only question to be considered is, whether they serve or obstruct congregational singing. On this opinions differ; some affirming, and others denying as positively, that the congregation trusts to the organ, and listens, rather than joins in the service. As far as my observation goes, this does not necessarily follow. In churches, where the congregations are irreligious, it is so; but it would be the same if there were only a clerk, or an orchestra of singers and fiddlers. In many churches I know, where the minister is evangelical, and the congregation devotional, the organ is scarcely heard, but at the commencement of the tune, its sounds being mingled with the full swell of the voices of the worshippers.

Among ourselves, at Brunswick chapel, Liverpool, the congregation joins with as much ardour as if there were no organ, and I think more. This is also the case at Bath, (in both the chapels,) at Margate, and at Newark. These facts have fixed my opinion in favour of organs in large chapels, and where they are prudently and constitutionally introduced. The only exception I know is one in which the tone of the organ is so intolerably harsh, that no sound in heaven or in earth can commingle with it. I believe, however, that even there, the people sing; but after all, the tones of the organ, like the voice of a fishwoman in a market, keep a lofty distinction above all others.—This exception only proves that it is of importance to have an instrument of full and mellifluous tone.

On the other hand, we shall regret the day when the liberty to introduce organs into our chapels, under certain circumstances, was granted, if we are to have organists also who seek to display their talents, and to tell a gaping crowd below with what elasticity their fingers can vibrate, and how many graces and trills they can add to the composition before them;—men who could not think the sun shone bright, unless they looked at his beams through a painted transparency of their own; and who would fancy they heightened the sublimity of a peal of thunder by ringing hand bells during the storm. The attempts of some organists to embellish and garnish the noble compositions of our great masters in psalmody is disgusting beyond endurance. Voluntaries are equally objectionable for a different reason. If good, they are out of place; if bad, they do not deserve a place any where.

As you are good enough to attach the least importance to an opinion of mine, I may give you in few words my deliberate judgment, formed now for several years, and after some observations of

the practical effect. It is, that organs in our large chapels are desirable,

1. When they abolish formal choirs of singers.
2. When they are played by persons of judgment and sobriety.
3. When the end for which they are introduced, to assist congregational singing, is steadily maintained.
4. When no voluntaries, interludes, &c, are, on any account, or at any time, permitted.
5. When the tune is not first played over by the organ alone,—a common but very silly practice.
6. When nothing is done rashly, or in the spirit of party; for many of the best men have the strongest prejudices against the instrument.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mr. Watson publishes the second Part of his Theological Institutes—Letter to Mr. Walton—Persecution in Barbadoes—The Argument a priori in proof of a First Cause—Dr. Samuel Clarke's Demonstration—Divinity of Christ—Missionary Report for 1823—Projected Mission to Jerusalem—Mission in Ceylon—In the West Indies—Catechisms of the Wesleyan Methodists—Mr. Watson preaches on the Mission to the Negroes at the Anniversary of 1824—Letters to Miss Watson.

THE second part of the Theological Institutes, completing the first volume, was published at the beginning of the year 1824, and fully realized the expectation which its predecessor had excited. The following note, which the author sent to his friend Mr. Walton, of Wakefield, with a copy of this publication, states the improvement of his health, and some interesting particulars respecting the missions.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I take the opportunity of my sending a copy of the second part of my work to Miss Walton, to wish you all the blessings of a new year. I am, through mercy, much better in health, and, as you may suppose, pretty well employed, though I have nearly given up travelling this winter. You will see that a storm has broken out in the West Indies; but though the difficulties are great enough, we know that this work is of the Lord, and he will not forsake it.

In the notices, which you will receive with this, you will see a long and affecting account from Mr. Shrewsbury.

Our mission fund goes on nobly. This year we exceed £35,000, being upward of £4,000 increase. Thanks be to God, and to our liberal friends, and especially to our collectors!

The "storm" here referred to, as having "broken out in the West Indies," was the riotous conduct of a number of white people, enemies to the religious instruction and improvement of the negro slaves, at Bridgetown, in the island of Barbadoes. They assembled one evening, by general consent, and spent the greater part of the night in demolishing the mission chapel and dwelling house, destroying the furniture with axes and hammers, and tearing to pieces the mission-

ary's library, consisting of about three hundred volumes. Mr. Shrewsbury, the missionary, a man of most exemplary character, was obliged to flee for his life. The case, as will appear from a subsequent part of this narrative, was afterward a subject of parliamentary censure. Previously to this outrage an insurrection of the slaves had broken out at Demerara, when Mr. Smith, an excellent missionary, belonging to the London Society, was condemned by a court martial to be executed. The iniquitous sentence was reversed by his majesty; but before the royal determination could be communicated to the colony, the man of God was released from his imprisonment by death; and removed to those abodes "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." By these circumstances, and the hostile spirit of many of the planters and the local authorities, the West India mission was placed in a state of peril and anxiety; and many of the poor negroes, who were robbed of the blessing of personal liberty, were in danger of losing their only solace in suffering,—the means of religious knowledge, and the ordinances of Christian worship.

Having ascertained in the first part of his Theological Institutes, the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, Mr. Watson proceeds, in the part now published, to examine their contents, and to collect from them that information on religious and moral subjects which they contain. This portion of the work treats of the existence and perfections of God,—his unity, spirituality, eternity, omnipotence, ubiquity, omniscience, immutability, wisdom, goodness, and holiness. It treats also of the trinity in unity, of the pre-existence of Christ; and partly of his Divinity, proving him to be the Jehovah of the Old Testament; the farther prosecution of the argument being reserved for a future occasion.

The knowledge of God, as an infinite and eternal Spirit, and as the Creator and Preserver of all things, was originally communicated to man by revelation; and when that knowledge has become extinct in any part of the world, it does not appear that it has ever been recovered but by the same means. It would therefore seem, judging from the history of all ages, that the human mind, by its own unassisted efforts, is unable to discover this first principle of all true religion.—But the existence of God, once communicated by his own revelation, direct or traditional, is capable of ample proof, and receives an irresistible corroborative evidence. It is well known that two modes of argument have been applied to this subject by learned men, which are usually denominated *à priori*, and *à posteriori*. "An argument *à priori* is an argument from something antecedent to something consequent; from principle to corollary; from cause to effect. An argument *à posteriori*, on the contrary, is an argument from consequent to antecedent; from effect to cause." The most remarkable examples of the former kind of reasoning on this great question are Dr. Samuel Clarke's "Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God," which has been often reprinted, and the more recent "Attempt to prove the Existence of the Supreme Unoriginated Being," by the late Bishop Hamilton.

Upon the argument *à priori*, Mr. Watson was inclined to lay but little stress. Whatever might be its value, he saw that it was not adapted to the popular mind; and the other argument was every way

sufficient, while it had the direct sanction of inspiration: "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead," Rom. i, 20. In discarding the argument *à priori*, Mr. Watson was sanctioned by high and competent authority. It is thus spoken of by Dr. Reid: "Sir Isaac Newton thought that the Deity, by existing every where, and at all times, constitutes time and space, immensity and eternity. This probably suggested to his great friend Dr. Clarke what he calls the argument *à priori* for the existence of an immense and eternal Being. Space and time, he thought, are only abstract or partial conceptions of an immensity and eternity, which forces itself upon our belief. And as immensity and eternity are not substances, they must be the attributes of a Being who is necessarily immense and eternal. These are the speculations of men of superior genius; but whether they be as solid as they are sublime, or whether they be the wanderings of imagination in a region beyond the limits of human understanding, I am unable to determine." (*Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind.* Essay iii; chap. iii.)

Dr. Clarke's "Demonstration" was far from being generally satisfactory at the time of its publication. Bishop Butler, then a young man pursuing his studies in a dissenting academy, addressed some letters to the author, in which he controverted some of his positions; and Dr. Gretton published a formal answer to the work. "Its main principle was, by many, deemed questionable, if not fallacious; and some of the inferences deduced from it, not only doubtful, but of dangerous tendency. The more cautious and considerate inquirers after truth judged it expedient rather to rely upon the well-established proofs of the Divine Being from arguments *à posteriori*,—those which resulted from the actual phenomena of the universe,—than to rest so great and fundamental a truth, the very ground of all moral and religious conduct, upon abstract metaphysical speculations, above the reach, perhaps, of any finite understandings, and confessedly not adapted to general apprehension. Even among those who were favourable to the general design of the work, considerable doubts were entertained as to the solidity of certain parts of it, on which doctrines of such importance were made to depend."* It is highly probable that it was by his speculations on this subject, that Dr. Samuel Clarke was led into Arianism. He thought that he could, on metaphysical principles, independently of Scripture, and of the phenomena of nature, demonstrate the necessary existence of a First Cause; but he could not, in the same manner, demonstrate that there are three co-equal and co-eternal persons in the Divine essence; and he is known to have spent a considerable part of his life in opposing this vital article of the Christian faith.

In proving the existence of God from the works of creation, and tracing the marks of wisdom and design which are presented by universal nature, Mr. Watson has judiciously availed himself of the writings of several eminent men, and especially of the Living Temple of John Howe, one of the most able and profound treatises in the entire compass of English theology. From this work Paley has borrowed several

* Bishop Van Mildert's Life of Dr. Waterland. The reader who wishes to pursue this subject farther, will be greatly assisted by an able Dissertation at the end of the fourth volume of Waterland's Works, edit. 1823.

of his best arguments and most striking illustrations; and he has made a very inadequate acknowledgment of his obligations to the author.—This part of Mr. Watson's work has more the appearance of a compilation than any other; and several persons expressed themselves disappointed on account of the copious citations with which it abounds. But the complaint rests upon no solid foundation. It would have been mere affectation and folly for the author to spend his time in original composition, merely to save appearances, when facts and arguments, every way suited to his purpose, were already prepared for him, and were beyond the reach of a considerable proportion of his readers; being found only in large and scarce publications. So much extract, however, occasions a degree of inequality in the style of this part of the work; and the author, some months before his death, requested his printer, the able translator of the Works of Arminius, to give a modern dress to such of the extracts as were somewhat antiquated in style, so that the inverted commas might be laid aside, and the different authors be simply referred to in the margin. Of course, it was intended that the whole of this should be done under Mr. Watson's own direction; but as nothing of the kind was attempted during his life, the work must now remain in its original form. It would be unjust to the author, to make him responsible for phraseology which he never saw.

In describing the perfections of the Divine nature, and establishing the doctrine of the trinity, and of the Godhead of Christ, Mr. Watson derives all his arguments from the Holy Scriptures, to which he subordinates every principle and sentiment; and while he brings out the general meaning of the sacred oracles, as bearing upon these vital truths, with all the force of demonstration, he furnishes many admirable illustrations of particular texts. A becoming seriousness and zeal characterize his reasonings in defence of the pre-existence and Divinity of Christ; for he felt that the Socinian controversy, respecting the person of the Son of God, affected the very substance of Christianity. If Christ be not God, in the full and proper sense of that term, Christian worship is idolatry, the doctrine of redemption is a fable, and in no true and legitimate sense is he a Saviour. On the other hand, as "God manifest in the flesh," he is entitled to our higest adoration; there is in the sacrifice of his death an adequate atonement for the sins of the whole human race; and he is worthy of the absolute confidence of mankind, both in life and death. He is able to save from all sin, and from all its penal consequences; and able to confer, through everlasting ages, all the happiness of which his redeemed creatures are capable. The subject was barely introduced in the second part of the Institutes; and the full discussion of the question was reserved for a subsequent portion of the work. A few weeks after the second part appeared, a new edition of the first part was published; a substantial proof of the estimate which was formed of its value.

At this time Mr. Watson sent forth, under very encouraging circumstances, the missionary report for the year 1823, containing intelligence of the most gratifying kind, both in regard to the prosperity of the foreign missions in general, and the liberality with which they were supported. In regard to the Holy Land, it is said, "The committee have for some time contemplated the establishment of a mission in Palestine; and it has recently been resolved to send out two persons

of suitable qualifications. Jerusalem is designed to be the scene of their labours; and they will be directed not merely to visit it, but, should God grant them an open door for exertion, to remain there, with a view to the establishment of a permanent mission. To the lively interests of the friends of missions, the committee need not commend this enterprise. The hope of giving back a portion of evangelical light to the country which witnessed its dawn, and its meridian splendour, cannot but awaken their ardour, and command co-operation. But they commend it to their earnest prayers, that the best means of making known a long-rejected Saviour may be pointed out to the agents employed; that Mohammedan hostility, Jewish unbelief, and Christian superstition, may be removed by Him whose Spirit commands all hearts; that Jerusalem may again witness its disciples 'in an upper room,' its pentecostal effusion of the grace, if not of the gifts, of the Spirit, and its thousands 'pricked in their hearts,' and asking, 'What shall we do?' Mr. Cook is about to proceed immediately to Palestine; and, should the opening be found favourable, he will be followed by others."

After giving an account of the mission schools in Ceylon, in which about four thousand children were under Christian instruction, the report adds: "Can it be that all this light and truth, infused into the youthful memory, and insinuating itself into the early and opening judgment, should be communicated in vain? That is impossible. It will be its lowest, yet glorious effect, to bring idolatry into discredit, and to purge the mind from superstitions to which only the most ignorant are subject, and which at once pollute the passions, and spread gloom and wretchedness through the breast. But happy as this result will be,—gratifying as it is to humanity, as well as to piety, that idols should be forsaken, and their deluded votaries exalted to a state of judgment and feeling more worthy of the human understanding,—we may look still higher. Of the youth thus taught, a considerable number have become members of a Christian society, and show that they have received the grace of God in truth. The rest are prepared, by their knowledge of the Scriptures, to hear with profit 'the word of life,' as explained and enforced by the servants of the Lord; and from them it is probable that the future increase in the societies already formed may be expected.

"In the course of the last year a great excitement was produced by the agitation of measures in parliament respecting the slave population of the West Indies; and the unhappy insurrection in the colony of Demerara exposed us, through various unfounded reports, to temporary reflections and slanders. These have all been removed by the facts which we were able to give to the world, of the peaceable conduct of our missionaries and societies there; and though, under the influence of mistaken views, and some false representations, a riot was produced in Barbadoes, which issued in the demolition of our mission chapel, in Bridgetown, by a lawless mob; yet the committee regard this as the ebullition of the moment, and rejoice in knowing that the great cause of enlightening and moralizing the slaves of the West Indies, by means of religious instruction, is daily gaining new friends among those whose connection with these colonies is the most intimate and influential.

"The cause of the religious instruction of the slave population of the West Indies has, during the last year, been ably advocated in a pamphlet, entitled, 'A Letter on the Means and Importance of converting the Slaves in the West Indies to Christianity, by the Right Hon. Sir George Henry Rose;' and the impression produced by his statements, and the force of his truly Christian appeals to the best feelings and most sacred principles, in behalf of the adoption of general and comprehensive measures for their moral improvement, promises to awaken a concern more lively and more extensive than has ever yet been cherished for the attainment of an object so essentially connected with the peace and welfare of the colonies themselves, and with the present and the everlasting interests of eight hundred thousand of our fellow creatures. For the liberal manner in which the labours of the Wesleyan missionaries are mentioned, among others, the committee offer their thanks to this benevolent and able advocate of the diffusion of Christian knowledge and Christian principles, as the basis of all morality and civil happiness. They trust that the effect of the diffusion of such sentiments as this excellent pamphlet contains, and of the obligations which it so convincingly establishes, will be to excite those societies which are already engaged in the work to increase the number of their agents, and to labour in it with renewed zeal. The field is so wide and so uncultivated, as to call for the co-operation of all to bring it under moral culture; and the committee may pledge themselves in behalf of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, that every new opening for the extension of this benefit will, to the utmost of their power, be promptly and efficiently embraced.

"On the news of the unhappy insurrection which recently occured in Demerara, the committee met the indiscriminate charges made against missionaries, as having excited the revolt, by publishing the instructions under which the society's missionaries are required to act, and expressing their confidence that neither of their missionaries in that colony had acted contrary to them. They expressed their hope, also, that the slaves in society would be found to have conducted themselves becoming their Christian profession. On the receipt of the first letter from Mr. Mortier, the missionary, after the insurrection, we learned that not only was he, and his colleague Mr. Cheesewright, free from all imputation, but that only two negro members of our society had been suspected. Mr. Mortier, at that time, expressed his belief of their innocence. A second letter from that missionary communicated the gratifying intelligence that these two persons, who were servants of the governor, had been liberated upon full conviction of their entire innocence; and that not one of the members of our large society, of twelve hundred and sixteen persons, chiefly slaves, had been in the least concerned in the revolt; and that the slaves of an estate under the care of Mr. Cheesewright had not only refused to join the rebels, but had conducted their master to a vessel, by which he reached Georgetown in safety."

The number of schools connected with the different mission stations is said to be one hundred and seventy-nine; and the number of children under instruction, eleven thousand nine hundred and forty-nine. The contributions to the society, during the year, amounted to £35,830. 14*s.* 8*d.*; making an increase for the year of £4,082. 4*s.* 9*d.*

It is added, in conclusion: "The committee are happy in having so much reason to believe, that, in proportion to this increase of exertion, at home and abroad, the spirit of prayer has been more largely poured forth; and that the great work is laid at the footstool of Him whose blessing alone can give it prosperity, in humble confession of the total insufficiency of man. The public acknowledgment which has of late been made of the office of 'the Lord, the Spirit,' and the necessity of his continued agency, has had its effect upon missionaries abroad, whose letters and other communications give pleasing proof that these are the sentiments which influence their minds; and show that they have been greatly comforted in their arduous and often discouraging labours, by the consideration that the difficulties of their work have been rightly estimated, and that 'the thousands of Israel,' in this land of privileges, are 'striving together with them in their prayers,' day and night making request with tears and with joy. The reasons for perseverance in this hallowed exercise remain unabated, and must continue in their full force, till the prayer taught us by our Lord, 'Thy kingdom come,' is accomplished in all its fulness: and fully it cannot be accomplished, even in this present world, until the joyful thrilling acclaim be heard in all lands, and is re-echoed from the heaven of heavens itself, 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.' Subjects of prayer, of a particular kind, and all subservient to this grand object, are constantly pressing upon the attention of those whose minds are directed to the operation of missions:—suitable instruments, endowed with those peculiar qualifications for that variety of service which is now required by operations so extended, are to be asked from the Lord of the harvest, whose sole prerogative it is to send forth labourers; the assistant missionaries who have been raised up from among the heathen, both in Africa and India, have a special claim upon our sympathy and intercessions, as the first fruits of a native ministry, from which, by the grace of Christ, so much is to be expected;—those of our brethren who have gone beyond the protection of British power (now in almost every colony so well employed by the representatives of majesty, both to defend and to sanction the self-denying and devoted servants of Christ) demand our constant remembrance before the throne of the heavenly grace. Living among savages and lawless tribes, capricious, sanguinary, and brutal, they claim, both for their personal protection and their success among a people so rugged and unpromising, our daily prayers. And, above all, when the malice and subtlety of the great spirit of evil, the ruler of the darkness of this world, are considered, and that he is now the more active and the more various in his assaults, as he can no longer keep his goods in peace, and knoweth that he hath but a short time; it is the more imperative upon us to be aware of his devices, to arm ourselves in this work with the whole armour of God, and to feel our own dependence, and the dependence of all our endeavours, upon God, and to pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and to watch thereunto with all perseverance.

"It is thus in humble and prayerful efforts that we are assured of the Divine co-operation. 'And shall not God hear his own elect when they cry day and night unto him?' The history of the past is the pledge of

the future; for to no great effort made, and persevered in, in this spirit, was success ever denied. When once the whole Church of Christ under its different names, and united in common zeal and love, is aroused to justify its original and proper character, as the light of the whole world, the great result to which all our wishes and exertions tend cannot be afar off. Girded by His might who hath given them the commission, the spiritual Israel will be able to go up and possess the whole land. Before communicated light the darkness must flee away; and before weapons of celestial temper, wielded by those whose hands are made strong by the hands of the God of Jacob, all opposition must be scattered. Mighty are they, through God, to pull down the strongest holds, and to abase every exalted and proud form of idolatry and superstition, which has defied our Saviour, and deluded, oppressed, and ravaged his redeemed creatures. In the name of the Lord, then, let us lift up our banners; and on this sacred day consecrate ourselves to efforts which shall never relax, and to a contest which, spurning all compromise, shall fix our steady eye upon complete and universal victory through the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his testimony. To him be glory in the Church throughout all ages. Amen."

Early in the spring of this year, and about the time at which this report made its appearance, Mr. Watson published "A Catechism of the Evidences of Christianity, and the Truth of the Holy Scriptures." He had previously compiled two catechisms of Christian doctrine, and Scripture history; one for the use of children of tender years, and the other for children of seven years of age and upward. They had been prepared under the direction of the conference, and submitted to the careful examination of a committee appointed for the purpose; and, having been approved, the entire series was published under the sanction of the connection, as the authorized catechisms of the body, and designed for the use of Sunday schools and private families. In the first and second of these publications considerable use was made of the catechism of the Church of England, and that of the Westminster assembly of divines, as well as of Mr. Wesley's "Instructions for Children." They have been in very extensive requisition; tens of thousands of children, especially in Sunday schools, both at home and abroad, have by means of them received their religious training; and they are justly entitled to the distinction which they have acquired, as a plain and familiar exposition of the first principles of evangelical truth. A preference is given to them in some institutions with which the Methodists have no connection. The "Catechism of the Evidences of Christianity" is an original and very important work, well adapted to establish the minds of young persons in the belief of the truth, and to guard them againt the snares of skepticism and infidelity. In an age like the present, when principles subversive of all religion and morality are sedulously disseminated, in cheap and inviting publications, and are often artfully mixed up with popular and periodical literature, the guardians of youth are certainly guilty of a fearful dereliction of duty, if they neglect to fortify their charge against evils of this fearful magnitude. Skepticism in religion flatters the pride of the unrenewed heart, and justifies all its vices and depravity; but it is ruinous to the soul, and often prematurely drowns men in destruction and perdition.

The minds of young people, therefore, cannot be too early impressed with the Divine origin of Christianity, and its authoritative character; and in the attainment of this object valuable assistance may be derived from Mr. Watson's manual. It states, with great clearness and force, the leading evidences of revealed religion, and refutes the most plausible and popular objections. Christian parents should not only put it into the hands of their children, as they advance in life, and their intellect expands; but they should frequently endeavour to ascertain, by actual examination, what degree of acquaintance has been formed with its facts and arguments. The most beneficial results might be justly anticipated from this wise and pious course. The number of young persons who have been preserved from infidelity by the blessing of God upon this excellent little work will only be known in "the day when God will judge the secrets of men's hearts by Jesus Christ."

In consequence of the delicacy of his health, Mr. Watson was compelled to avoid travelling during the winter; but as the spring approached, he lent his assistance at a few missionary meetings in the country. Burslem, Bristol, and two or three minor places, were favoured with his help; but he was not able to repeat those labours to which a few years before he had been accustomed, and in which he had taken so much delight. He rendered, however, to the general society, at its anniversary in April and May, the most important service. This was an occasion of unusual interest, on account of the peculiar state of the West India mission. The question of negro emancipation had begun to excite attention, and in some quarters was warmly agitated; and the house of commons had passed several resolutions, pledging the legislature to introduce certain measures of amelioration in regard to the negro, with a reference to the ultimate extinction of slavery. The death of the missionary, Smith, in the prison at Demerara, and the riot in Barbadoes, by which the Methodist chapel was demolished, and the missionary driven from the island under circumstances of peculiar atrocity, caused a feverish anxiety among the friends of the mission cause. Many of the planters assumed an attitude of determined hostility, not only to the religious instruction of the slave population, and to all missionary operations, but to the government itself; and either believed, or affected to believe, that the missionaries were the agents of the abolitionists in England. As Mr. Watson had a thorough knowledge of West Indian society, and perfectly understood the nature and bearing of the mission to the negro slaves, as well as the peculiar state of public feeling, he was requested by the committee to preach one of the annual sermons before the society; to confine his attention to the society's labours in the West Indies; and to prepare his discourse with a reference to publication. With this request he complied, and preached at the City-Road chapel, on Thursday evening, April 29th. The task assigned to him was one of great delicacy, and in many respects was exceedingly difficult; but it was one of the peculiarities of his character, that his mind always rose with the occasion; and he never disappointed the expectation of his friends in any emergency.

The text selected was most appropriate. It was, "Honour all men," 1 Peter ii, 17; enjoining upon Christians the duty of honouring human

nature in all its forms. The sermon was addressed to a large and very respectable congregation. It was delivered with fluency and power; and was heard with the most profound and breathless attention. The delivery of it occupied two hours within a few minutes; and a member of the senate, who had accompanied Mr. Butterworth to the chapel, said, when returning from the service, "The sermon was the greatest display of intellectual strength in a public speaker I ever heard. I have perhaps sometimes witnessed an equal degree of power for a short period; but an extemporary address, of two hours' length, delivered with such unabated energy of thought and feeling, never before came under my observation." As the sermon had been prepared with a view to the press, it was soon published, under the title of, "The Religious Instruction of the Slaves in the West India Colonies advocated and defended." It is the most elaborate of all Mr. Watson's printed discourses, and is, without exception, one of the noblest compositions of the kind in the English language. There are passages in it which, for sublimity of thought, richness of illustration, and strength and beauty of expression, would not suffer from a comparison with the most admired productions of our best prose writers; but its great excellence consists in the pure and elevated principles which it maintains, and the spirit of Christian benevolence and justice with which it is so thoroughly imbued. It quickly passed to a second, a third, and a fourth edition.

Had Mr. Watson never written any thing beside this admirable discourse, it would have been sufficient to establish his reputation as a man of superior genius and talent, and a Christian philanthropist. But while his intellectual powers appeared daily to acquire new vigour, and his mental resources seemed to be all but inexhaustible, he was a subject of disease, and often of great personal suffering; and his general aspect, and the frequent prostration of his strength, excited the sympathies of his friends, and awakened in their minds many painful anxieties as to the result.

About a fortnight after the delivery of his powerful discourse before the missionary society, Mr. Watson addressed the following letters to his daughter, then at school in Paris. They show the tender yearnings of a father's heart; and present, with some others which will be given in the course of this narrative, an interesting view of his spirit in the domestic relations.

May 13th, 1824.

My Dearest Child,—Yours, dated April 29th, did not arrive at Wellington-street till yesterday; so that we were long kept in anxiety and suspense. It was ill judged in you not to write by post, especially your first letter; and the consequence is, you have been kept so much longer from hearing of home.

Your mother is much better than when you left; and I, through mercy, am able to go through my exercises in a tolerable degree of health. I am not surprised that you felt lonely and uncomfortable at first, never having been from home at all; but in such situations your object is to be kept in view; and the constancy of application, and the occupancy of your time, together with increased familiarity with new scenes and new faces, will remove all uneasy impressions. To this,

you must recollect that you are in the way of duty; and must look up to God for his presence with you, and his blessing upon your endeavours. Thus you may be happy every where; though you cannot forget, nor do we wish you to forget, that you are not *at home.*

I am glad to hear that you find your French master so competent. In addition to what you are required to do in French, read as much in it as you can; and if you choose such standard historical works as are within your reach, you will get information, while you improve in the language. Converse as much as you can. Be determined to talk; and by asking the names of things, you will acquire a *copia verborum.* Resolutely also attempt to *think* in French, which will greatly facilitate your progress. It is satisfactory that your pronunciation is pretty near the standard; but you must remember that accent is as important as pronunciation; though you must take care of affectation in this particular. Attend patiently to music. Take particular care of your fingering, which you know is essential to a good execution. When you are pretty much at ease in French, it will be time enough for you to begin Italian.

Amidst your application, take care of your health; and in order to promote it, walk much in the garden. As for acquaintance among the ladies, they come in course; and the more general they are, the better. You must lean on nothing as a source of happiness, but on God, on your daily duty, and your hope of seeing home; the last not to be indulged so as to make you unquiet.

We have had a very good anniversary. The collections were £1,300 and upward. My sermon I have been requested to publish; and shall send you a copy or two. The Magazines I will send as you request.

The two sick S——s are, I hear, at the point of death. Mr. Mawer, of Lincoln, died suddenly, at supper table; and Miss C. is dead. So we are in a dying world. Let us live then, my dearest girl, to God and for eternity. Let the Bible and a throne of grace be increasingly precious to us.

I shall, *Deo volente*, visit you in September. Write immediately.—Keep up your spirits. Your mother sends her love and blessing.

May 24th, 1824.

My Dearest Girl,—I write by return of post, in answer to yours, to say, that whatever your own judgment thinks necessary for your improvement, I wish you to attend to; and I shall not mind the expense. As I am going into Devonshire, I shall not be able soon again to write to you, and must leave your mother and you to exchange letters.

The way to avoid as much as possible the English accent in speaking French, is to be very attentive to the native French you hear spoken; and by comparing the difference in your own mind, you may get a tact for discriminating, and this effort will produce a delicacy of ear. The ear acquires its distinguishing delicacy in language, as in music, by long and close application.

Above all, my dear Mary, give your heart fully to God, and live entirely to him. You have entered on the Christian course, and nothing could have given so much pleasure to your father. Read the Scrip-

tures. Observe your times of private prayer; and watch your heart; so shall you grow in grace, and become a steady and honourable member of the Church of Christ.

God bless you. Keep up your spirits.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Watson visits Oxford—Conference of 1824—Letters to his Daughter—First Report of the Anti-Slavery Society—Agitations in the West Indies—Letter to the Right Hon. Wilmot Horton—Letter to the Rev. Elijah Hoole—Letter to the Rev. Frederick England—Missionary Report of 1824—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in 1825—Letter to Mr. Garbutt—Debate in the House of Commons on the Riot in Barbadoes—Sir R. W. Horton—Singular Impression—Conference of 1825—Address to the Societies—Letter to the Rev. Robert Young—Mr. Watson publishes the third Part of his Theological Institutes—Notices concerning it.

In the early part of the summer of 1824 Mr. Watson visited Oxford, and spent some days in that interesting city and neighbourhood, where the friends were delighted with his spirit and conversation. His cheerfulness, his sanctified wit and humour, his intelligence, and his communicative habits, were to them a source of the highest gratification. It was the time of the commemoration, when the members of the university assemble in the vast theatre, erected by Archbishop Sheldon; degrees are conferred; prize poems, and other compositions, are recited; and the undergraduates claim the right of expressing their opinion of the highest authorities in that learned body, either by plaudits, or by groans and hisses. As a spectator, Mr. Watson enjoyed these proceedings; for his powerful and well-disciplined mind drew practical instruction from almost every object that was presented to his attention. Before his return to London he accompanied Mr. Cubitt, who was then stationed in the Oxford circuit, and some other friends, to Nuneham, the seat of Lord Harcourt, to refresh his spirits by a change of air and scenery; and to survey those beauties of art and nature of which, through life, he was a passionate admirer. One of the party was a medical gentleman, of considerable experience and skill. While leaning upon the branch of a tree in the estate of the nobleman just mentioned, Mr. Watson, in a manner perfectly frank and unconstrained, began to speak concerning himself. "I know not," said he, "what change is taking place in my constitution; but I am apprehensive that disease, in a somewhat new form, is beginning to develope itself. I believe that I am not naturally an ill-tempered man; at least my friends have not been in the habit of charging me with ill nature; but of late I have found myself snappish, without being able to assign any particular reason for it. There is also another symptom which leads me to form this opinion concerning myself. Up to a late period my spirit has been sanguine and cheerful; my horizon has been generally bright and distinct; but latterly I have caught myself gloomy and beclouded, and yet I could not tell why." The medical gentleman stated his persuasion to be that Mr. Watson's liver was seriously diseased; but expressed a hope that by prudent management his life might be prolonged, and his services to the Church continued for many years;

and he engaged, before Mr. Watson left Oxford, to give him some written directions in regard to diet and medicine.

A more interesting companion than Mr. Watson, especially in a place like Nuneham, it is scarcely possible to conceive. He generally carried with him a small magnifying glass for the examination of minute objects, and particularly of flowers, and a lancet with which he was accustomed to dissect them. Several young persons were of the party on this occasion; and it appeared to be an object with him to render himself as agreeable and instructive as possible. His spirit was unusually bland and kind; and he directed their attention to endless scenes of wonder in the creation, accompanied by devout and hallowed references to the great Architect, who had surrounded them with such striking displays of his wisdom, power, and love. The individuals who formed the party still retain a vivid recollection of that memorable day.

The conference of 1824 was held in Leeds; and during its sittings Mr. Watson enjoyed several pleasing interviews with his old and faithful friends at Wakefield. At this time it was found necessary to make some new arrangements in regard to the secretaryship of the missionary society. Mr. Bunting was about to leave London, and therefore could not any longer continue in the office of secretary, which he had so long and honourably sustained; and the labours and responsibility of this department of the mission work were greatly increased, in consequence of the augmented income of the society, and the enlargement of the foreign operations. The conference, therefore, in compliance with the recommendation of the managing committee, appointed three resident secretaries, who were to devote their whole time and attention to the concerns of the society. Mr. Taylor, having lost his health, removed from the mission house, where he was succeeded by the Rev. George Morley; the Rev. John Mason was appointed as the third secretary; and Mr. Watson remained in his former situation. The foreign correspondence, and the publications of the society, were confided to him; and the correspondence with the auxiliary societies, the accounts, the outfit of missionaries, &c, devolved more especially upon his colleagues. During the period in which these excellent men were associated together in connection with the missionary society, mutual confidence, and a perfect cordiality of affection, were preserved among them. Mr. Watson was invariably found most assiduously attentive to the duties of his office, and ever ready to take his full share of labour and responsibility; and in all his official intercourse with his fellow secretaries, he was perfectly frank and candid,—an example of Christian honour and uprightness.

The influx of strangers into Leeds, at the time of each conference in that town, from the surrounding country, especially on the Lord's day, is usually very large; often amounting to many thousands more than the chapels can contain. It is therefore common for a number of preachers, when the chapels are filled, to address the assembled multitudes in the open air; and on one Sunday evening, at the conference of 1824, being in tolerable health, Mr. Watson took his share in this honourable work, in the neighbourhood of the chapel in Albion-street. In early life he had borne the hootings and peltings of mobs while he delivered his evangelical message to the peasants of Lincoln-

shire, in fields and lanes; but in the populous town of Leeds, where religion has exerted so powerful an influence upon all classes, he found the people as serious and devotional in the open air as in the most splendid temple; and the zeal and simplicity with which he conducted the entire service were admired by those who had the privilege of being present.

On his return from the conference Mr. Watson addressed the following kind and characteristic letter to his daughter, still in Paris:—

Aug. 31*st*, 1824.

My Dearest Child,—I had written to you when yours of yesterday arrived; and as I did not send it to the post, I now substitute this in its place. I have had a severe bilious attack since conference; from which, however, I am almost entirely recovered. It laid me aside for a fortnight, and was very severe. In consequence, business has got so much into arrear, that it is not at all likely that I can get to see you in September, or even not till the end of October. As I am thus disappointed in not being with you at the holidays, I wish you to look about you as much as you can, and shall therefore give you leave to spend as much money as is necessary for your gratification. I hope you are getting on well in your studies.

We are nearly settled at No. 6, Myddleton-square, Spafields; and only want you to complete our comforts. We sacrifice this for your benefit; and the time is now fast running away, when we trust to be brought together again, and to bless the Lord for his goodness.

My dear child, cleave to God in heart. Forget him not for a moment. Keep that good thing which has been committed to you; and never be unfaithful to your God and Father, who alone is the God of your youth, and the guide of your life. Forget not your Bible and your prayers. Your mother sends her love. Our joint blessing be upon you. My dear Mary,

I am your ever affectionate father.

The following letter is not dated; but it appears to have been written a few weeks after the former:—

My Dearest Child,—This morning we received yours. That to which you refer has not come to hand. Your mother is too much occupied to write; and as I am confined at home, I supply her place on the only piece of letter paper I have, and that half a sheet. To put the most into my small room, I must observe the signs of method.

1. You wish me to determine about your coming home at Christmas. We want you much, and you wish to return. So then let it be settled,—*Home at Christmas.*

2. As to health. I am quite an asthmatic invalid, and fear therefore that I shall not be well enough to come to fetch you; but if we can meet with an escort with whom you might be entrusted to Dover, I will endeavour to meet you there. In the meantime keep up your spirits, my good girl. Christmas will soon be here.

3. Correspondence out. We sent you a parcel; which parcel contained, beside letters, flannels, &c, to keep you warm, *cum multis aliis.* These you do not seem to have received; but we hope they have not shared the fate of the stockings.

4. Correspondence home. I am sorry to find that you have not written to those kind friends who have sent you letters. Do this without delay.

5. News of different complexions. Several sudden deaths have happened among young people, though none that you know personally; but they warn not to forget God, and not to be too much attached to worldly pleasures, all which "perish in the using," and are but poor substitutes for reading, prayer, and decided habits.

6. Miscellaneous. A second edition of my sermon has been printed; and a gentleman, I know not who, has offered to print a fine edition at his own expense, to be circulated among members of parliament. That will be the third edition. So you see it takes. My only satisfaction in the matter is, that it may do good.

We are pleasantly situated as to our house; and your very cheerful room, and my equally cheerful study, await you. And now, to close this πολυλογια, I commend you, my dear girl, to God, and send you the warmest blessing of a father's heart. Keep God in your thoughts, and seek his blessing, my dearest child.

During the autumn of this year the Anti-Slavery Society published its first report. When this institution was founded, Mr. Watson hesitated to connect himself with it, as being doubtful what character it might assume. He perceived that such a society, had its tone and measures been violent, might easily involve the missionaries and their congregations in the West Indies in the most serious calamities; and both the missionaries and their people were authorized to look to him for counsel and protection. No man was more deeply impressed than he with the evils of negro slavery; and no man could be more desirous of bringing that wretched system to an end; but the question of emancipation, at that time, was beset with difficulties of the most formidable kind. His friend, Mr. Bunting, however, had connected himself with this society soon after its formation; and had fearlessly denounced West India slavery in the Wesleyan Magazine. When the first report of this institution was published, Mr. Watson's fears concerning it vanished; and, in an able article which he drew up for the same Magazine, he denominated the Anti-Slavery Society a "truly patriotic and Christian society." It has, says he, "in the strife and struggle of prejudices and passions excited by the great questions arising out of the slavery existing in so many of our colonies, been greatly misrepresented, and assailed with coarse and disgraceful virulence. Its objects are now, however, most fairly before the public; and they will be found to be of a kind from which we are persuaded no sound politician, no real friend to the country and her colonies,—to say nothing of the higher considerations of humanity and religion,—can withhold his cordial assent, and in which such a one can hesitate to co-operate. It will be seen that no measures of violence or injustice are proposed; that moderation is united with firmness; that nothing is advocated but legitimate measures; and that the great ends proposed are, to awaken the British public to the injustice, impolicy, and cruelty of the slave system, and to remind them of the great moral duty of strengthening the hands of government in mitigating the evils which are immediately removable by its wisdom and firmness, with a view to as speedy a ter-

mination as practicable of a state of things which, without any benefit to the colonies, seals up near a million of our fellow beings and fellow subjects in ignorance and barbarism, and excludes them from the benefits of an equal and free government."

The committee of the Anti-Slavery Society state in their report, respecting the measure of emancipation, "Your committee, and all who take their view of the subject, may not only consent to delay, but may consistently recommend it, as affording the best means of insuring to the injured negro race the full benefit of their intended deliverance. They may, and they do, most earnestly wish to accomplish this great end with the smallest personal risk, and the least immediate disadvantage, to the slave owner. They may cheerfully submit to their share of any loss which shall be proved to be incurred by the change; but they cannot yield one atom of their principle,—that nothing can justify the making one man a slave, OR EVEN THE RETENTION OF ONE MAN IN SLAVERY LONGER THAN THE REAL BENEFIT OF THE SLAVE HIMSELF, VIEWED IN ALL HIS CIRCUMSTANCES AND RELATIONS, MAY REQUIRE." This passage, says Mr. Watson, "appears to contain the only just principle which can be urged for the continuance of slavery for any period; and the principle, too, by which alone it can be limited. The case is much the same as that of a stolen child among ourselves. No right was ever acquired in the child: but supposing the party who has committed the theft to be brought to a sense of the evil of his crime, and of the duty of restitution, he is not to abandon the child to starve, in order to put away his crime; for that would be to aggravate the injury. He is to support it, and to educate it, if able, until the parents can be found; and if not, to do his utmost that the child shall sustain no injury, as to its future situation in life, which he can prevent. Slavery is a national violence, a national theft. The nation could never acquire a moral right of property in slaves; and could therefore never give it by any legislative act to any individuals whatever. National repentance of this evil has been announced; and what then follows, as 'fruits for repentance?' Not, we grant, emancipation *instanter*, IF that, after calm investigation, can be proved injurious to the slaves; but emancipation as soon as ever it can be beneficial, and the honest and united efforts of government to remove all present real injuries, and to adopt instant means to prepare the slaves for as speedy a relief as possible, from the necessary evils of that bondage to which we have reduced them, in opposition to every law of God."

In the meantime, the agitation of this question in England was particularly obnoxious to the advocates of interminable slavery in the colonies, especially in Jamaica, where almost every attempt at even ameliorating the condition of the negro met with the most determined resistance. The situation of the missionaries in that island was peculiarly critical and trying; and some of them were driven, by the force of circumstances, unhappily to sign certain resolutions in favour of slavery, and strongly reflecting upon the excellent men in this country who were labouring to obtain for the negro the rights of humanity. Had these resolutions merely expressed the opinions of the individuals who adopted them, and been confined in their circulation to Jamaica, the affair would have been of no great importance, so far

as the public and the missionary society were concerned; but they pledged the Wesleyan body to the approval of negro slavery, and were reprinted in England; and the greatest stress was laid upon them by the advocates of West Indian bondage. It became therefore the painful duty of the managing committee publicly to disavow the doctrine which those resolutions maintained; and to declare that in the estimation of the Wesleyan body the holding of men in interminable slavery is inconsistent with the principles of Christianity.

A copy of the committee's resolutions was forwarded to Earl Bathurst, his majesty's principal secretary of state for the colonies; and his lordship, through the medium of Mr. Wilmot Horton, the under secretary of that department, expressed his fears that evil would ensue in the colonies from this act of the committee, and his regret that it should have been deemed necessary. To this communication, Mr. Watson returned the following answer:—

To the Right Hon. R. W. Horton.

Wesleyan Mission House, Hatton-Garden, Feb. 11th, 1825.

Sir,—In replying to the intimation which you did me the honour to communicate on the 2d instant, that Lord Bathurst is apprehensive, that in the extract from the minutes of the committee, relative to certain resolutions passed by some of the missionaries of our society in Jamaica, the expressions which refer to the inconsistency of slavery with Christianity may excite alarm and suspicion in the West Indies, I beg to observe,—

1. That the sentiment expressed in that extract is nothing more than we have uniformly stated to gentlemen connected with the West Indies, whenever the subject has been mentioned. Our opinions, as a body, respecting slavery, as a *system*, have long been known throughout the West Indies; but as it is equally known by all persons who will do us justice, that our missionaries are restrained from agitating all abstract questions of this kind, both in public and private, and that we hold it as a most sacred Christian duty, that obedience should be paid by slaves to their owners, and that seditions and insurrections are crimes of the highest nature, no exceptions have ever been taken to our missions on that account.

2. That though we, in common with the great body of people in this country, think that nothing can be more obvious than that slavery, in all its forms, is utterly inconsistent with the Christian religion; yet the peaceable, resigned habits of our negro congregations, for near forty years, are sufficiently in proof that this opinion has never interfered with the enforcement of the Christian duty of submission by our society and its missionaries.

3. That as we never did hide this opinion on the general question of slavery, we could not shrink from its avowal, when circumstances obliged us either to make it, or tacitly to profess the contrary opinion. We hope we have pursued our course in perfect openness and sincerity. We cannot surrender principles even to obtain that favour in the West Indies by which we might increase our opportunities of doing good. Wherever policy may be proper, we think it out of its place in the proceedings of a religious society; and wish it most clearly to be understood, that while we ask protection for our missions, on the ground

of their inculcating peace and good order in the colonies, and our missionaries being restrained from all interference with the civil concerns of the population, our society in this country is but of one sentiment on the subject of slavery as a system.

My apology for not immediately acknowledging the honour of your communication is, that I have but just returned from a distant part of the kingdom.

I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

RICHARD WATSON.

The following letters, addressed to missionaries in the East Indies, were written during the same month:—

To the Rev. Elijah Hoole, of Madras.

London, Feb. 24th, 1825.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have greatly sympathized with you in your afflictions; and rejoiced to find that you were recovering your health when we last heard of you. May that blessing to you be confirmed!

When Mr. Williamson arrives, what is to be your plan of operation? I mean unitedly? It is not surely intended that all should be fixed at Madras. There must be strength enough for another station, either in the mountains you visited, or Bangalore; so that Seringapatam may be visited. This is, I think, *your* work; for we should hope that the other preachers, with the assistant missionary, can do the Madras work; and that you and another may be spared for fair and straightforward operations in the best-selected place. For, though visits may do some good, they must be confined to be effectual. There should be one central point round which you may radiate. If the seed be not too widely scattered, you may weed it, and water it; but if you take too wide a range, you can only appear seldom, and be as a comet, which, when seen, is wondered at, and goes away, without producing any visible effect. We are expecting, therefore, that some special result will follow those praiseworthy journeys you have made; and that either Bangalore be taken up with Seringapatam as an appendage, or some other. On this you will do well to consult Mr. Carver, and give him the aid of your own information.

Our friends are going on nobly at Manchester, building five new chapels, all of good, and one of large size. The Juvenile Missionary Society there is going on flourishingly.

We always hear of you, and from you, with great interest.

To the Rev. Frederick England, Negapatam.

London, Feb. 25th, 1825.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—The first thing to strive for among brethren is unity. That is worth much, nay, all but conscience.

I and Mrs. Watson have greatly regretted to hear of your being in a poor state of health since your arrival; but we hope that, by the blessing of God, you have now got through the seasoning, to which most are subject. May you be strong to labour!

The first thing necessary for usefulness is, the orderly appointment

of time for study, and exertion; uniting in both zeal and moderation, nicely balanced on the right hand and on the left.

The second is, a right direction of studies; always being employed on what you can bring into good and immediate use.

The third, making every thing tend to usefulness as we go along. This is a great art; but it is one which he will learn whose whole soul is always asking, "What shall I do to farther the object to which I solemnly devoted myself? Cannot I this day, this hour, sow some seed which may be found at a future day vegetating into plant, and matured into more abundant fruit?"

These things persevered in, prayed over, and steadily pursued, will tell in time. Labour in hope.

I thank you for two or three of your friendly letters. We remember you with kind feelings, and send you our best wishes. Mr. Davies has returned I fear in consumption; Mr. Clough will sail for Ceylon next month; Mr. Newstead after conference, if his health permit; but he is very unwell.

Give my love to the brethren.

The progress of the Wesleyan missions, as detailed in the report of the year 1824, was rapid and encouraging; and Mr. Watson, as usual, commences this interesting publication in a tone of holy triumph. "Although success," says he, "is neither the ground nor the measure of the duty of Christians with reference to the work of missions, the committee have again the satisfaction to meet the society with their congratulations on the prosperity of the cause in which they are engaged, and to unite with them in thanksgiving to God, whose blessing has continued to crown the labours of their brethren abroad, and who, by their instrumentality, during the past year, has extended the kingdom of his Son into regions, and among tribes, where Christ was never named; thus exhibiting the cheering progress of those visitations of light and salvation which it is the prayer of the Church may speedily be vouchsafed to all the nations of the earth."

After stating the general prosperity of the West India mission, notwithstanding the agitations concerning slavery, the report says, "A mission in the small island of Montserrat was commenced little more than four years ago, and has hitherto had the labours of one missionary only. Mr. Maddocks was the first that commenced the work in this, one of the most neglected colonies in the West Indies. He built a chapel, and commenced a school for negro children on a small scale. He was soon removed from his labours by death; but not before he had sown a seed in the hearts of many, which is now bringing forth fruit unto life eternal. His memory was peculiarly honoured by the negroes, as the first instrument of introducing them to the light of the Gospel; and it is an affecting incident, mentioned in a late communication, that a negro child, first received into his school, and indebted to him for her first religious impressions, and who at the early age of fourteen years lately died in the triumph and joy of faith, used frequently to be seen standing and weeping over his grave.

"The case of two of our missions in the West Indies, indeed, pre-

sents a painful contrast. The demolition of the chapel and premises in Barbadoes, by a most wanton and unprovoked outrage, is known, as well as that the committee have taken measures for the rebuilding of the chapel, and the re-establishment of the mission. The committee have continued to receive additional testimonials of the excellence of Mr. Shrewsbury's character, and the inoffensiveness of his conduct, while resident in that colony; and a report, lately made by the council of Barbadoes, which, though sufficiently hostile to missions in its general character, has not only condemned the outrages, but, by the manner in which it has spoken of Mr. Shrewsbury's character, has sufficiently cleared him from the aspersions with which that excellent man was assailed during the blind rage of his persecutors. The committee will proceed to the re-establishment of that mission in the spirit of a perfect charity, not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but trusting that God, who knows that the only object of the society is to benefit their fellow creatures in their best interests, will so dispose the hearts of men, that even in that colony, so morally necessitous, the light and influence of the Gospel may finally prevail.

"To the great praise of our persecuted society in Barbadoes, it ought, however, to be reported, that while they are deprived of the ordinances of religion, without a missionary, and their chapel in ruins, they continue their contributions regularly to the auxiliary missionary society established there in aid of the general fund; and in the midst of their own spiritual destitution have continued to be mindful of the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ throughout the world. A few weeks ago the general treasurers received a remittance of £50 from the Barbadoes auxiliary society, with the advice that £40 or £50 more would be transmitted shortly by a private hand.

"The other is the Demerara mission, which has greatly suffered, though the committee trust only for a time, from the late painful events which have occurred in that colony: for though no member of our societies was implicated in the revolt, yet the existence of martial law for some time prevented their evening meetings, and a hostile spirit against missions of every kind prevented the attendance of the slaves, and many others, on the Sundays. The chapels, especially in the country, were, in consequence, for some time nearly deserted, and the societies greatly scattered; and though our two missionaries escaped the hand of legal violence, they were exposed to obloquies and insults. One of them but narrowly escaped a violent personal attack from certain white people, who waylaid him on his return by night from his duty in the country. The state of feeling in that colony has been truly lamentable; too blindly violent, indeed, to allow the committee to offer any remarks upon the manner in which their own and other missionaries have been vilified; but they cannot refrain from expressing their sympathy with their friends of the London Missionary Society in that larger share of suffering which has fallen to their lot; their abhorrence of the persecutions of which the late Rev. John Smith was the victim, and of that mockery of all the principles as well as forms of justice which marked his trial; and their satisfaction at so full a manifestation of his innocence, as to all the charges brought against him, which the minutes of his trial exhibit. The manner of his trial and treatment they feel to be the common cause, not of missionaries only, or of the

Christian public engaged by their benevolent acts in benefiting the colonies, but of general justice and humanity; and they trust it will meet with that expression of the public sentiment, both in and out of parliament, and be followed by such measures, as may prevent the recurrence of an enormity so disgraceful to the Christian name, and to the justice of our country.

"To another subject the committee turn with great satisfaction. In the plan for extending the means of religious instruction to the slave population of the West Indies, and for rendering more efficient the Church establishment there, which has been lately laid before parliament, no interference with the labours of the missionaries of the different societies, or obstruction of their exertions, is intended. Of this, indeed, a deputation of the committee was obligingly assured previously by Earl Bathurst. Connected as this plan is, therefore, with these tolerant principles, the committee rejoice in it, as the means of promoting so great a work as the instruction of the slaves, of which so small a part has yet been achieved; and they earnestly pray that, under the Divine direction, such agents may be sent forth into this field of labour, reproach, and danger, as may become the instruments of turning many to righteousness, and serve, by their zeal and devotedness, to stimulate those who have been long employed in this work in the colonies to more abundant labours, and more abundant sacrifices. Party spirit, on any side, when, after all the aid which can be sent forth, the great majority of pagan slaves must unhappily remain long unprovided for, would appear in its most odious and disgusting features."

According to this report, twenty-one missionaries, several of whom were married, were sent out in the course of the year: the contributions to the society were £38,046. 9*s*. 7*d*.; being an increase of £2,215. 14*s*. 11*d*. upon those of the preceding year. In addition to this handsome sum, the society had received a munificent benefaction of £10,000 from the Rev. T. Dodwell, vicar of Welby, in Lincolnshire. This excellent clergyman has already been mentioned in these memoirs.—Under his faithful ministry Mr. Watson received great spiritual benefit in early life. He was a personal friend of Mr. Wesley and of Dr. Coke; and had long been a liberal supporter of the Wesleyan missions. When they were conducted by Dr. Coke, Mr. Dodwell frequently presented liberal donations to the fund; and after the doctor's death, when the anniversaries of missionary societies were held in the neighbourhood of Welby, the free-will offerings of this devout man were generally presented, and gratefully received. In reference to the princely sum just mentioned, it is said, "Part of this money has been funded, in order to meet those exigencies which, in so extended a work, may be expected occasionally to arise; and the proceeds will, of course, be brought into the list of annual receipts, in future years, so long as it shall remain unappropriated."

In the spring of this year Mr. Watson made a tour in the north, and attended the anniversaries of missionary societies at Liverpool, Manchester, Newark, Stafford, and some other places; and wherever he went, though his emaciated appearance excited sympathy and concern, his sermons and speeches were heard with unabated delight and profit. The "outward man" appeared to be sinking into decay; but the strength of "the inner man" was undiminished, and his thinkings retained all

their freshness and vigour. If there was any alteration in his public ministrations, it was that they were more spiritual; and his whole manner was increasingly devout. The long and severe affliction to which he had been subject had somewhat chastened his natural flow of spirits, and rendered him more grave and sober; but his mental powers were, if possible, invigorated; and his prayerful habits had secured to him, by God's blessing, a sanctified use of his protracted sufferings. Having for some years been kept in a state of almost constant suspense, in regard to the continuance of his life, his thoughts were familiarized with eternity; and on some occasions he appeared to approach so nearly to pure intellect and perfect sanctity, as scarcely to seem like an inhabitant of earth.

Mr. Watson returned to London, so as to be present at the anniversary of the General Missionary Society in April and May; but he took no part in the public meeting, except that of reading the report, which he had previously prepared. At this meeting Mr. Shrewsbury, the missionary who had been driven, by persecuting violence, from the island of Barbadoes, related several anecdotes illustrative of the beneficial influence of religious instruction upon the negro character. "I may give," said he, "the case of a free young man in Grenada, who was apprenticed to a stone mason; and when he had served his apprenticeship, being very industrious, he laid by his earnings; and when he had obtained one hundred pounds, his first act was, to purchase the freedom of his own mother. He continued to lay by his money, till he bought the freedom of one of his brothers; and when I left the island he was about to purchase the liberation of another of them. In this case we see Christianity gradually resisting slavery; and it will, by its general diffusion, abolish it; for as it is one of the greatest moral evils that exists in the earth, it must fall before the Gospel."

In reference to Barbadoes, and the riots there, Mr. Shrewsbury said: "I regret that the chapel in that island had been standing only about four years when it was destroyed; but I am happy to state, that, six weeks before, I had paid the last farthing of debt due upon it with my own hands; so that all our debts were paid before it was demolished. The people who pulled down the chapel were wholly whites, excepting only one man of colour, who had been educated in England, and who thought he must imitate them; and, to the praise of the coloured people of the island, not one of them will now associate with him."

Speaking of Mr. Smith, the missionary who died in prison at Demerara, Mr. Shrewsbury added: "I had his acquaintance, and knew his conduct. He was a Christian and a gentleman; and, as a Christian, the leading traits in his character were lowliness and humility of mind. The occasion on which I visited Demerara was the death of our two missionaries, Bellamy and Ames; and when I arrived, I found that Mr. Smith had opened his house to the destitute, and taken their widows under his own roof, and was treating them with the kindness of a father and a friend. It was not possible for a man of Mr. Smith's mind to be guilty of instigating insurrection: he died in the cause of God, and he died for it. But this is one means by which God spreads the Gospel; he raises up men to adorn the Gospel in their lives; and to show its power by patiently suffering in a righteous cause."

Notwithstanding the delicacy of Mr. Watson's health, and the importance of his services as secretary to the missionary society, the friends in some places were very anxious to secure his appointment to their respective circuits as an itinerant preacher. To an application which he received from Hull, where he had formerly laboured so usefully and acceptably, he returned the following answer. It shows the infirm state of his health, and lays down a very important principle by which he was guided in his public conduct.

To Mr. Robert Garbutt, Hull.

London, May 15th, 1825.

My Dear Sir,—I thank you for your very kind letter, still pressing me to the Hull circuit; and that you may not suffer from your kindness, for want of explicitness in me, I must again inform you, that I am not in a state of health to warrant my engaging in the regular labours of a circuit.

I have no doubt of the kind consideration of the Hull friends; but it will always be a rule with me, not to undertake a circuit in an invalid state. If in tolerable health I was appointed to one, and then fell sick, it would be another matter; but with a rational doubtfulness of doing the full work, I would not go to any place; because I should think I was not called to it, however inclination might lead.

This is my present state. Perhaps by care, and God's blessing, I may become effective; but I have no immediate prospect of it, and must, therefore, for the coming year, decline your kind invitation; of which I shall always retain a grateful and pleasing recollection.

With best wishes and prayers that your appointment may be directed by heavenly wisdom,

I am yours very affectionately.

On the 23d of June Mr. Buxton brought the subject of the outrage in Barbadoes before the house of commons; and after an able speech, in which he detailed the principal circumstances connected with that atrocious affair, moved, "That an humble address be presented to his majesty, representing to his majesty, that this house, having taken into their most serious consideration the papers laid before them, relating to the demolition of the Methodist chapel in Barbadoes, and the expulsion of Mr. Shrewsbury, a licensed teacher of religion, deem it their duty to declare, that they view with the utmost amazement and detestation that scandalous and daring violation of law; and that they beseech his majesty to take such steps as shall secure the rebuilding of the chapel at the expense of the colony of Barbadoes; and also to assure his majesty that this house will afford him every assistance which may be required, in order to prevent the recurrence of such outrages, and in order to secure ample protection and religious toleration to all his majesty's subjects in that part of his dominions."

The question was met with a decided negative by Mr. Wilmot Horton, the under secretary of state for the colonies, who attempted to palliate the conduct of the Barbadians, and to impute blame both to Mr. Shrewsbury, and the Wesleyan missionary committee. Mr. Buxton was ably supported by Mr. William Smith, and Mr. Butterworth; and Mr. Brougham and Dr. Lushington also followed on the same side.—

Mr. Canning moved an amendment, which was acknowledged by all parties to be such, and which passed without opposition. He declared that "in the conduct of Mr. Shrewsbury it was impossible to find any cause for blame whatever;" and described the conduct of the rioters in the most unqualified terms of reprobation. The resolution adopted by the house was, "That an humble address be presented to his majesty, to represent to his majesty, that this house, having taken into their most serious consideration the papers laid before them, relating to the demolition of the Methodist chapel in Barbadoes, deem it their duty to declare that they view with the utmost indignation that scandalous and daring violation of the law; and having seen, with great satisfaction, the instructions which have been sent out by his majesty's secretary of state to the governor of Barbadoes, to prevent a recurrence of similar outrages, they humbly assure his majesty of their readiness to concur in every measure which his majesty may deem necessary for securing ample protection and religious toleration to all his majesty's subjects in that part of his majesty's dominions."

The following is Mr. Watson's account of this important debate and its result:—"The society owes it to Mr. Buxton to state, that he, without any application from them, from his own sense of justice, and respect to religious liberty, spontaneously gave notice in the last session of parliament, almost as soon as the accounts of the outrage had been made public, of his intention to bring the case under the attention of the house of commons. In the same spirit of liberality, and regard to the cause of religious liberty, and the instruction of the slaves by missionary labours, his motion was supported in the house by different speakers. His majesty's government had taken every step to protect the mission in the island of Barbadoes; but not only past outrages, but the continuance of an unabated spirit of religious intolerance and persecution, and a defiance of government itself, certainly rendered an expression of the sense of parliament necessary, in a state of things so extraordinary and disgraceful. The case was met in a most manly and honourable manner by Mr. Canning, whose amendment embraced all the strong points of Mr. Buxton's motion, without qualification; and the unanimous expression of the 'indignation' of the house of commons at the transactions in Barbadoes, and the assurance which its address gives to his majesty of its readiness '*to concur in every measure which his majesty may deem necessary for securing ample protection and religious toleration to all his majesty's subjects in the West India colonies,*' is a shield thrown around the missionaries, and the religious liberties of the people of colour, and the slaves themselves, which will henceforward, we trust, be found sufficient to ward off all the attempts of violent or prejudiced men to disturb them; and will be felt as an additional motive for the peaceful and prudent use of those inestimable advantages, the free enjoyment of the liberty of worship, and the rights of conscience. No immediate effect may be produced on the excited and headlong mob of Barbadoes; but the better part of that community will feel the necessity of exerting themselves to rescue the colony from its present disgrace. Mr. Rayner, a missionary from St. Vincent's, recently attempted to land, to re-establish the mission; but though military protection was offered him by the governor, such was the violence of the mob, that riot and mischief were apprehended; and he

accordingly returned to St. Vincent's. An unmanly prosecution had been threatened, too, against that excellent woman, Mrs. Gill, a widow, and person of colour, of excellent sense and deep piety, who had suffered the members of the society, bereaved of their ministers, to meet in her house, for purposes of prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures. The magistrates some time ago suppressed these meetings; but she was also threatened with prosecution for having once permitted them. We are happy, however, to find, from a hint thrown out in the debate, that she is likely to be protected from this malevolent proceeding.—The only points in the debate on which any censure was attempted to be fixed upon Mr. Shrewsbury and the committee were most satisfactorily answered by Mr. Butterworth; and we trust that the whole of this affair, painful as it has been, and much as the society's property has been destroyed, will turn out 'for the furtherance of the Gospel.' The character of Mr. Shrewsbury, and the objects of the society, have been abundantly exculpated; and the benefit of protection in their endeavours to promote the true interests of the colonies, by instructing and moralizing the population, has been, by this decision of the house of commons, more fully secured to them. That advantage will, we are assured, be used by the society for the sole purpose of more widely disseminating those principles of evangelical truth which redound to the glory of God by promoting 'peace on earth, and good will to men.'"

There is reason to believe that the speech delivered by Mr. Horton in this debate, and which subjected him to the sarcasm of Mr. Brougham, has, in some quarters, operated to his disadvantage. He was no enemy to the Wesleyan missions; and he was well known to be friendly to measures of amelioration in regard to the slaves. His attempts to benefit the poor, especially in the agricultural districts, by means of emigration, were acknowledged to reflect the highest credit upon his humanity, even by those who disputed the correctness of his theoretical principles. In allusion to the assumption of one of the speakers, that Mr. Horton had intended to justify the conduct of the Barbadians, Mr. Canning remarked, "Nothing was farther from his honourable friend's intention. Indeed, in human concerns, there was no more difficult process in developing a transaction than to endeavour to discriminate the motives and reasons which led to it, from an intended justification of the transaction itself. No two things in moral nature are so different as the exciting and justificatory cause. With respect to the act itself, there could be but one opinion upon it, namely, that it was most unjustifiable, wholly indefensible, a violation of law, a defiance of authority, a flying in the face of parliament and the country. He did not hesitate so to characterize the transaction."

After lending his very efficient and acceptable assistance at missionary meetings at Nottingham, Leicester, and some other places, Mr. Watson attended the conference of 1825, which was held in Bristol. As his health was very delicate, he could not bear to travel from London to Bristol in one journey; and at his request, the writer of these memoirs agreed to accompany him, and spend a night at Marlborough on the way. The subject is here mentioned because of a curious incident which Mr. Watson related on the occasion. We arrived at Marlborough in the afternoon; and after dining at the inn, walked out to see that ancient town, and very interesting neighbour-

hood, the large and numerous *tumuli* of which are very remarkable. In passing by the church yard, which is close by the Bath and Bristol road, Mr. Watson pointed to a grave stone, in a conspicuous situation, and said, "The first time I travelled this way, that grave stone caught my eye; and especially the words, *Who died . . . . . aged forty-two.* A very deep impression, for which I could not account, was immediately made upon my mind, that I should die precisely at the same age.—The impression was both strong and sudden. I have already passed beyond that period; and this shows how little stress can be justly laid upon those sudden impulses and impressions of which some people make so much account." This impression, it appears, had created considerable uneasiness in the family of Mr. Watson; but its precise effect upon his own mind it is not easy to determine.

The following resolutions, drawn up by Mr. Watson, were unanimously adopted by the conference:—"The most cordial and respectful thanks of the conference shall be presented to Thomas Fowell Buxton, Esq., M. P., for the very able and liberal manner in which he brought forward the case of Mr. Shrewsbury, and the outrages committed against the Wesleyan mission in Barbadoes, in the house of commons, on the 23d of June, from which has resulted, not only the indignant condemnation of those outrages by parliament, but also a declaration of its determination to concur with his majesty in any measures which may be necessary for the prevention of similar proceedings, and to secure the full benefit of religious toleration to all his majesty's subjects in the West Indies.

"The very grateful and affectionate thanks of the conference shall be presented to Joseph Butterworth, Esq., M. P., for his parliamentary support to the cause of the missions; and especially for the satisfactory manner in which he defended Mr. Shrewsbury, and the missionary committee, from certain charges and insinuations made against them in the course of the debate of the 23d of June.

"The very cordial and respectful thanks of the conference shall be presented to William Smith, Esq., M. P., to Henry Brougham, Esq., M. P., and to Dr. Lushington, M. P., for the able support given by them to Mr. Buxton's motion respecting the expulsion of Mr. Shrewsbury from Barbadoes, and the destruction of the chapel belonging to the Wesleyan mission at Bridgetown, in that island; and for the liberal manner in which they were pleased to vindicate Mr. Shrewsbury's character, and the objects and operations of the Wesleyan missions in the West Indies."

The conference also, this year, at Mr. Watson's suggestion, published the declaration that "nothing is more contrary to the writings of our venerable founder, and to the views which our societies in general maintain to this day, than the notion that it is in any sense consistent with the spirit or the laws of Christianity, to enslave our fellow men, or to retain them in interminable bondage. The slavery of the negroes this conference considers to be one of the most heinous of our public offences; the *principle* of which it becomes us as a nation instantly and heartily to renounce; and the *practice* of which we are equally bound to discontinue, as speedily as a prudent and benevolent regard to the interests of those who are the subjects of this oppression will permit."

The annual pastoral address of the conference to the Methodist

societies was this year written by Mr. Watson; and the spirit of pure and elevated devotion which it breathes presents a fine display of the temper of his mind at this period. That spirit was not assumed for the occasion, but was the habit of his life. The nation at that time was in a state of great and growing prosperity; and commercial speculation was indulged to an unlimited extent, which soon after led to the most calamitous results. The address very properly warns religious people against an abuse of the providential goodness of God.

At the conclusion of the conference Mr. Watson went to Gloucester, with his friend the Rev. William France, whose company he specially requested. They both preached in that city on the Sunday, and on the following day attended the public missionary meeting, where the increased contributions of the people demonstrated the lively interest they took in the conversion of the heathen. Before his return to London he spent a few weeks at Cheltenham, in the hope of receiving some improvement in his health; but in this as well as in every similar case the relief which he obtained was only temporary. The disease under which he laboured was unsubdued. A medical gentleman whom he consulted there promised a complete cure; but Mr. Watson's hopes were not sanguine.

A mission to the Holy Land still occupied Mr. Watson's attention; and the reference to that project which the following letter contains will show that the arrangements in regard to it were still incomplete:—

To the Rev. Robert Young, Jamaica.

London, Oct. 10th, 1825.

My Dear Brother,—Your duty to write regularly to the committee an account of your proceedings does not at all depend upon your hearing from us. Your letters are always read; and you thus move under the committee's eye.

We hear that you have been invited to accept ordination in the Church. Your sermon on Onesimus has probably led to this. It is, however, no great sacrifice not to have become a West India clergyman. You have acted well in your mission, and have the confidence of the committee. I do not think they will be willing, unless health should demand it, that you should *soon* remove from Jamaica. Your heart has been led toward Palestine. The committee and secretaries feel obliged by your offer to go to that field of labour, and they will not lose sight of it at a future time; but as yet their plans with respect to that interesting part of the world are only in a state of infancy. I advise you, however, to study the Arabic closely, and get on with your Latin. Above all, maintain simplicity of soul,—a full purpose to live to God every moment.

During the autumn Mr. Watson published the third part of his "Theological Institutes;" the rapid sale of the first volume, and the decided approbation of competent judges, affording him the fullest confidence of ultimate success in his responsible and difficult undertaking. The part now published completes the argument on the Divinity of Christ; treats of his incarnation, and of the union of the Divine and human natures in his person; and contains a discussion of the questions relating to the Godhead and personality of the

Holy Ghost; and to the fall of man, and the consequent corruption of his nature. In regard to these subjects the author presents one of the distinguishing peculiarities of his mind,—absolute submission to the authority of Scripture. He was aware that men can know nothing of God as existing in three persons, nothing concerning Christ or the Holy Spirit, except through the medium of revelation. On these questions every oracle in nature is silent. Having ascertained the Scripture to be a revelation made by God himself, the great business of the writer is, to discover its meaning, and then to surrender himself entirely to its guidance. A professed acknowledgment of the Bible, accompanied by a denial of its vital and most prominent doctrines, because they happen to contradict preconceived opinions, he felt to be nothing more than disguised unbelief; and the system defended by the disciples of Socinus, which degrades the Son of God to a mere man, and represents him in his mediatorial character as nothing more than a religious teacher and a martyr, he could regard in no other light than a particular modification of infidelity, equally dishonourable to God, and injurious to the spiritual interests of men. He found that one leading design of revelation is to exterminate idolatry, and to secure to God alone the religious homage of mankind. On this point God has declared himself to be "jealous;" his "glory will he not give to another;" and the acknowledgment of him as the only object of prayer and praise, of supreme confidence and love, is enjoined by the first commandment of his law. Idolatry is so abhorrent to him, that those who practise it shall be for ever excluded from his presence. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators nor idolaters, ... shall inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi, 9, 10. And yet this same revelation of God, authenticated by prophecy, and by signs and wonders and divers miracles, gives to Christ all the titles of God; ascribes to him all the essential and incommunicable attributes of the Divine nature; declares him to be the Creator of the universe, the Governor of the world, the raiser of the dead, and the Judge of all mankind; and it claims for him the highest religious homage both on earth and in heaven. The conclusion is inevitable. Jesus Christ is God, in the full and absolute sense; and as such men are every where bound to acknowledge and adore him.

In this part of his work, Mr. Watson also contends zealously for the Divine and eternal Sonship of Christ, in opposition to the theory that he is only to be regarded as the Son of God in respect of his human nature. About seven or eight years before, in his pamphlet on that subject, he had avowed his conviction that this question had not only a direct bearing upon the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity, but also upon the authority of the Bible; and continued attention to this question had only confirmed him in these views. His former reasonings on this subject are greatly strengthened in the Institutes; and the whole of his discussions on the person of Christ form a triumphant defence of those principles which have been held sacred by the Christian Church in all ages, and in which all orthodox believers are agreed. Independently of the general argument, this department of the work contains many valuable elucidations of particular texts; and a considerable portion of sound and original criticism, especially on the New Testament.

Having established, on a Scriptural basis, the Divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit, Mr. Watson subjoins the following beautiful remarks on the character and office of the Christian Comforter:—"As a Divine person our regards are, therefore, justly due to him as the object of worship and trust, of prayer and blessing; duties to which we are specially called, both by the general consideration of his Divinity, and by that affectingly benevolent and attractive character under which he is presented to us in the whole Scriptures. In creation, we see him moving upon the face of chaos, and reducing it to a beautiful order; in providence, 'renewing the face of the earth,' 'garnishing the heavens,' and giving 'life' to man. In grace, we behold him expanding the prophetic scene to the vision of the seers of the Old Testament, and making a perfect revelation of the doctrine of Christ to the apostles of the New. He 'reproves the world of sin,' and works secret conviction of its evil and danger in the heart. He is the Spirit of grace and supplication: the softened heart, the yielding will, all heavenly desires and tendencies are from him. To the troubled spirits of penitent men who are led by his influence to Christ, and in whose hearts he has wrought faith, the Spirit hastens with the news of pardon, and bears witness of their sonship with their spirit. He aids their 'infirmities;' 'makes intercession for them;' inspires thoughts of consolation, and feelings of peace; plants and perfects in them whatsoever things are pure, and lovely, and honest, and of good report; delights in his own work in the renewed heart; dwells in the soul as in a temple; and, after having rendered the spirit to God, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, sanctified and meet for heaven, finishes his benevolent and glorious work by raising the bodies of saints in immortal life at the last day. So powerfully does 'the Spirit of glory and of God' claim our love, our praise, and our obedience! In the forms of the Churches of Christ, in all ages, he has therefore been associated with the Father and the Son in equal glory and blessing; and where such forms are not in use, this distinct recognition of the Spirit, so much in danger of being neglected, ought, by ministers, to be most carefully and constantly made, in every gratulatory act of devotion, that so to each person of the eternal trinity glory may equally be given 'in the Church throughout all ages.' Amen."

The question of original sin Mr. Watson has treated with great judgment and moderation. According to him, the doctrine of Holy Scripture on this subject is equally removed from the bold speculations of those who contend for the imputation of Adam's personal guilt to his posterity, in the strict and proper sense of the expression; and of those who maintain that mankind are either not at all affected by the fall of their first parent, or are merely subjected by it to affliction and mortality. Mr. Watson shows that the sin of Adam is imputed to mankind in its results and consequences; that he was a federal head and representative of his race; and that, as the effect of his fall, they derive from him a corrupt and sinful nature, and are made liable to death, and to innumerable other calamities. On these grounds he accounts for the death and sufferings of infants, who have not been guilty of any actual sin; and for that depravity and wickedness which have characterized mankind in all ages and nations.

This is a doctrine of immense importance, and affects the entire

system of Christian theology. It was the universal sinfulness of men that rendered necessary a universal atonement; and because man in his fallen state is "without strength," and totally depraved both in mind and heart, the influence of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary, in order to his renewal in righteousness and true holiness. Defective views of original sin lead to defective and erroneous conclusions respecting the extent of redemption, and the nature of the Christian salvation. When Mr. Wesley, therefore, was engaged in defence of this doctrine against the Semi-Pelagian refinements of Dr. Taylor, he declared that the question at issue between him and his antagonist was, in point of fact, whether deism or Christianity were to be preferred. For if man were not fallen, he needed neither a Redeemer nor a Sanctifier; and the Christian scheme must, of necessity, fall to the ground, as being inapplicable to the state of the world. Of this Mr. Watson was fully aware. He has therefore exhibited this momentous truth in a striking and impressive light, and with great force of evidence, derived from Scripture testimony, and the history and experience of mankind.

CHAPTER XIX.

State of the Mission Fund at the End of the Year 1825—Appeals for farther Exertions—Missionary Report for 1825—Mr. Watson publishes a Tract against Popery—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in 1826—Loss of the Maria Mail Boat, and of five Missionaries, &c—Panic of 1825-6—Mr. Watson assists in opening a new Chapel in Manchester—Letter to Dr. Ellis—Death of Joseph Butterworth, Esq.—Mr. Watson preaches and publishes his funeral Sermon—The British Senate—Abolition of Slavery—Mr. Watson is elected President of the Conference—Letters to Mrs. Watson—Mr. Watson's Conduct as President—Letter to a young Preacher—Mr. Watson attends a Missionary Meeting at Leeds—Letter to Mrs. Watson—Letter to Dr. Ellis—Mr. Watson publishes the fourth Part of his Theological Institutes.

As Mr. Watson proceeded in the composition of his Theological Institutes, the subscribers became increasingly sensible of the importance and value of the work; but he did not suffer it to engage his exclusive attention. The missions lay near his heart, and daily engaged his anxieties and prayers. At the end of the year it was found, that, in various parts of the kingdom, the zeal of the friends of this cause had been unusually on the alert; and that more extended efforts than had been witnessed at any former period were made to augment the pecuniary supplies. In the missionary notices, therefore, for January, 1826, Mr. Watson inserted the following appropriate address:—"Among the circumstances of the year, which has just closed upon the efforts of our friends in behalf of missions throughout the connection, we feel bound specially to notice the extension of branch societies into the villages of the different circuits. In many instances this has been done from the beginning; but, of late, owing to the honourable and enlightened zeal of many of our official friends, in different circuits, supported by the kind co-operation of the preachers, several circuits have adopted it as a principle, that both Christian duty and Christian privilege require that every Methodist society and congregation, in every village of a circuit, ought to have a regularly-organized branch

society, with its anniversary meeting, its committee, officers, and regular collectors. With this view, in the Nottingham, Newark, Doncaster, and some other circuits, branch societies have been formed by the visitation of the preachers, travelling and local, and other friends, who have devoted now and then an evening for this purpose; and thus, with very little expense for travelling, the public of those retired places have been called together to learn the state of the heathen world, to praise God for the successes and progress of his Gospel, and to offer the aid of their Christian liberality in behalf of interests so important to the world, and so dear to the hearts of all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity.

"We cordially thank those who have thus formally adopted so noble a principle, and have so effectually acted upon it; and we most earnestly recommend its general adoption throughout the kingdom, as a most effectual means of raising the annual amount of the general fund, so as to prevent those embarrassments which must otherwise arise from the late great extension of our missions, and to provide means for new efforts to which we are obviously called by the openings of Divine Providence. Nor are considerations of weight wanting to enforce this upon the attention of our friends every where. If the affording of aid to this blessed work were a burden, it would be but just that it should be shared among all our societies and congregations, and the influence they can command, that in all, as the apostle speaks, there may be 'an equality.' But this is not the view taken of this great and lofty and all-inspiring charity. The high vocation of the whole Church is to shine as the light of the world; nor ought any individual to be prevented, for want of the opportunity which is afforded by the organization of such missionary societies, from taking his share in thus enlightening the world by the diffusion of the Gospel. The knowledge, too, which is thus communicated on the condition of heathen nations to the body of pious people, living in retired parts of the country, is of great importance, to impress them both with deeper convictions of the value of the Gospel, in the light of which they walk, and with sentiments of gratitude to God for this inestimable benefit. That sympathy for perishing millions is thus spread, which surely ought to pervade the whole Church; and an increasing number of powerful and effectual prayers for the coming of the kingdom of Christ are thus called forth, and must bring down from heaven richer effusions of Divine influence upon the universal cause of truth and righteousness, and upon the labours of those who are engaged in promoting it, both at home and abroad. It is thus, too, that the natural spirit of selfishness, which is so contrary to the spirit of true Christianity, is most effectually subdued, and the sanctifying habit of living, not to ourselves, but to Him that died for us and rose again, is encouraged and matured. How important is it, also, to train up the young of all our congregations to this zeal for Christ, this universal benevolence, this public spirit; and to give them a share in the grace and benefit of the work of evangelizing the world! Nor are those high interests and hopes to be overlooked which are excited in the bosom of the pious, by the intelligence of new conquests obtained by the Saviour whom they love, and the new honours which are thus accumulated around his adored name; sentiments the most pure, elevating, and rich, which even grace awakens

in the spirit of a believer, and which, more than any other, connect him, while on earth, with the Church above.

"To lay it down, then, as an explicit rule, that, wherever there is a society of Christians, great or small, in town, village, or hamlet, this company of lovers and friends of Christ shall be united into a branch missionary society, associated to spread the savour of his name, as they may have opportunity, to the ends of the world, is what we recommend to the preachers of every circuit, and the officers of every auxiliary society. It is easily carried into effect, by holding a series of evening meetings in the way practised in the circuits above alluded to; and not only will the means of supporting and extending our missions be thus greatly increased, but the most happy and important effects, by God's blessing, will follow upon the intelligence, the feelings, the character, and the joys of thousands of the friends of Christ, who now are but very partially acquainted with the operations and successes of missions."

The same subject was resumed the following month. Having mentioned the amount of contributions which had been raised in the course of the year, and which had greatly exceeded every former instance of liberality, Mr. Watson says: "For this increase in the fund, through the benevolence and zeal of the friends of missions, at home and abroad, the committee offer their thanks to almighty God, by whose good and 'free Spirit' it has been put into the hearts of the people, to offer 'so willingly' for the extension of his kingdom of truth and mercy upon earth. The increased expenditure, arising out of the enlargement of the work in several important quarters, the commencement of new missions, and many incidental expenses of sickness, return of missionaries, &c, has been met, and a pledge has been afforded of the continued and unabated interest of the Churches of Christ in this great department of usefulness. The satisfaction with which all our friends will reflect upon what has been done by their exertions, and the blessed effects produced by them in moral influence at home, and the diffusion of 'the savour of the knowledge of Christ' abroad, will incite them to perseverance and renewed activity; for neither the state of the fund, nor the magnitude of the society's missions, will allow them to think that the same exertion is no longer necessary. What has been effected hitherto in many important stations is chiefly the work of preparation; encouraging, it is true; fresh, and fraught with promise, as the first ripe sheaf of corn in the fields of Israel, presented as a 'wave offering before the Lord' in the temple, at once an offering of gratitude, homage, and faith; but still to be followed by the wider sweeps of the sickle in the hands of the unwearied and joyful labourer.

"We mentioned in our last the establishment of missionary associations in every village of every circuit throughout the connection, as an object to be steadily kept in view; and instanced some circuits in which this had been carried into full operation. This has led to a determination in some places, where the plan has been but imperfectly acted upon, to attempt to accomplish it fully without delay; and on all such endeavours we doubt not but the special blessing of God, who never forgets what is done for his 'name's sake,' will rest. Other circuits which we did not mention by name, have stated that they, as well as those mentioned by us last month, have largely cultivated their

villages, and formed associations in them. Of course we did not intend to exclude them from this just praise. In the west of Cornwall, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and several neighbouring circuits, in Manchester, Leeds, London, and other circuits, this has been done; in some of them perfectly, and in others to a very considerable extent. The circuits mentioned in our last we named particularly, because in their communications with us they had connected their efforts with the great general principle of attaching, in *this form*, every distinct society throughout the connection with the mission cause; and not to undervalue, or throw into shade, the exertions of those places whose works of faith and love, from their eminence in the connection, are both generally known and appreciated.

"We commend the whole work to our friends every where, as the work of our common Saviour and Lord, 'to whom be glory and dominion for ever.'"

In full accordance with these sentiments and anticipations was the annual report of the Methodist Missionary Society which Mr. Watson published about this time. It presents a most animating view of the spirit of holy zeal at home, and of the progress of the work of God in heathen lands.

The report states that twenty missionaries, most of whom were married, had been sent out in the course of the year, to different parts of the world. The income of the society was £45,766. 1*s*. 1*d*.; being an increase in the receipts of the year of £7,719. 11*s*. 6*d*.

The following is the conclusion of this very interesting document:—

"The committee are gratefully sensible how much of this increase of their funds they owe to the activity of the members of the committees and the officers and collectors of the auxiliary and branch societies; to several ministers especially, whose exertions in attending and giving efficiency to the services of the different anniversaries are above all praise; to female piety, and to juvenile energy. Where selection is impossible, they tender to all their unfeigned thanks, and again commit this great cause to their affectionate cares and labours. That both are needed, the exhausted state of the fund, notwithstanding the praiseworthy exertions made during the year, sufficiently shows. The most effectual argument they can use, is, that it is the cause of Christ. To seek and to save that which was lost, he came into our world, and for that made the oblation of his precious blood. In the accomplishment of the travail of his soul, he deigns to use us as his instruments, to admit us to share the tenderness of his sympathies, and to partake the exultation of his triumphs. His hand of co-operating power and mercy is with us; and, dark and wretched as the world still is, his kingdom is visibly enlarging, by his blessings upon human exertions. The seed, in every place, yields its produce to the hands of the reapers, and provides, by its increase, for a sowing more copious, and a harvest more abundant. Wherever we turn, our work enlarges before us,—the blessed work of declaring the glory and salvation of our Redeemer. Success calls for renewed exertion; and every labourer sent forth, pressed by the very ripeness and richness of the field, beckons others to follow him. A state of things exists, which a very few years ago no one could have anticipated; so that far from finding it difficult to bestow useful exertion, we are not able, in fact, to overtake the work to which

we are invited. In our own missions alone, 'Come over and help us,' is the voice from almost every quarter. After all that has been done, there are willing hearers, even in heathen countries, without a preacher; numbers of children anxious to be taught, but without schools; and even Christian societies, now but occasionally visited, asking for constant care and superintendence; missionaries failing in their strength, from excessive labours, beseeching us, not to be lightened of their portion of this sacred toil, but to be supplied with coadjutors, by whose aid they may proceed to the help of the destitute souls around them. The vineyard of the Lord lies before his labourers; and we are thus called, by the force of principle, by the glow of feeling, by the power of pity, by the ardour of hope, by the sublime scenes and prospects which the mighty operations of Providence among the nations of the earth now spread around us, by our loyalty, and by our love to Christ, to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; and the more so, as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord."

At this period the popish controversy was somewhat warmly agitated in the United Kingdom. The Roman Catholics were loud and clamorous in their demands for political power; and several Protestants, both in the Church and among the sects, contended that their claims ought to be conceded; while others were apprehensive that this measure would be ultimately fatal to British liberty and independence. In Ireland the Romish priests were greatly alarmed for the consequences of that extensive circulation which the Holy Scriptures obtained; and in several instances they attended the meetings of Bible societies for the purpose of exciting disturbance. They were unhappily successful in not a few cases, and the Protestant speakers were compelled to flee for their lives. Challenges to public discussions of the points at issue between the Roman Catholics and Protestants were the consequence of these intemperate proceedings; and immense crowds often assembled to hear the tenets and claims of their respective Churches openly canvassed by rival disputants. The results were most satisfactory. Many a votary of Rome was convinced of his error, and joined the Protestant communities. The wily popish bishops saw "whereunto this" was likely "to grow," and laid their priests under an interdict in regard to public disputations.

Mr. Watson's head and heart were thoroughly Protestant; and the prominence thus given to the principles which produced the reformation afforded him the highest pleasure. His delicate health, his official engagements, and the important theological work which he had in hand, rendered him unable to devote any considerable portion of time to this controversy; and yet he desired to do some service to the cause of truth and liberty. He could not conveniently produce any original work against popery; but he translated from the Latin of Episcopius one of the best tracts ever written in opposition to its peculiar dogmas. It is entitled, "The Labyrinth, or Popish Circle; being a Confutation of the assumed Infallibility of the Church of Rome: translated from the Latin of Simon Episcopius, sometime Professor of Divinity in the University of Leyden." In a concise advertisement Mr. Watson says, "The following tractate of the learned Episcopius is found in the first volume of his Works, published in folio at Amsterdam in 1650; and

was intended for popular use, having been first published in the Dutch language. In former times it produced great effect, for which it was admirably adapted, by confining the argument to those leading points of the controversy on which, in fact, all the rest depend. It penetrates to the citadel of the enemy, and leaves the outworks, numerous as they are, an easy prey. It is perhaps one of the best specimens of the dilemma, or cornuted kind of argument, which can be produced; and possesses the merit of uniting brevity with a plainness which lies level to every capacity."

Sufficient means were not employed to bring this excellent pamphlet into general notice; and hence it has never commanded that attention to which it is justly entitled. The learned author proves, by an easy and familiar process, that the papists cannot point out the true Church which cannot err; that they cannot demonstrate from the Holy Scriptures that the head of their Church cannot err; that they cannot prove from the fathers, that their Church cannot err; that they cannot prove this point by argument; that the controversy respecting the succession is useless and endless; and that truth is to be preferred to antiquity and succession. Having demonstrated that the claims of the Romish Church cannot be substantiated, the pious author says, "What is the conclusion of the whole matter? I answer, that the word of God be freely and fearlessly read by all men; that the conscience of no man be bound to the judgment of others; that every man love his brother, and endeavour to instruct him by the best arguments out of the word of God; and that we wait for the time in which the Lord God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, the only Judge of the quick and the dead, will pass his sentence of life and death. By these means the consciences of men will be preserved free, all Christians will live in amity and peace, and the word of God will be the only rule of the actions of mankind."

The anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in 1826 was a season of unusual solemnity. The mission cause, indeed, was in a state of great and growing prosperity, and the fund was liberally supported. So far as the work of God was concerned, there was every thing to excite thankfulness and congratulation; but these joyous feelings were restrained and chastened by the distressing intelligence which had previously arrived, that five of the society's missionaries in the West Indies had perished at sea, with two missionaries' wives, four of their children, and two servants. In reporting this calamity, Mr. Watson says, "We have the most painful and distressing duty imposed upon us, to communicate to our readers the loss at sea of several of our valuable and beloved missionaries, returning from the district meeting, held at St. Kitt's in February last. To add to this heart-rending disaster, three of the missionaries had their wives, and two of them their children also, with them. Of the whole party, one of the wives only, Mrs. Jones, was saved; the rest, consisting of five missionaries, two wives, and four children, with two servants, are lost. The sufferers are, Mr. and Mrs. White, with their three children; Mr. and Mrs. Truscott, and one child; Mr. Jones, Mr. Hillier, and Mr. Oke, all of the Antigua station, which has, by this mysterious and awful dispensation of Providence, been deprived of all its missionaries! Mrs. Hillier is left a widow, with five children. So heavy a stroke has not been

sustained by any modern mission; and the committee can only bow in silence before the Lord of the whole earth, and mingle their own commiserations with those of the friends of the deceased, and of the afflicted societies by whom they were so greatly beloved, and among whom they had successfully laboured. Most of them were among our tried, experienced, and most useful missionaries; and those who were younger in the work were highly promising, and greatly respected by all ranks. The letters communicating the catastrophe are brief and hurried, being written on the eve of the departure of the packet, and with great agitation; they leave, however, no hope that any have been saved, with the exception of Mrs. Jones."

This notice was published simultaneously with the annual meeting of the society; and Mr. Butterworth, on taking the chair on that occasion, not being aware that his own dissolution was so near, thus feelingly alluded to the subject in his opening speech:—"We shall have to present to you scenes which will create sorrowful emotions, and such as call for joy and congratulation. We never before had on this occasion to weep over the loss (I was going to say the untimely deaths) of a considerable number of our missionaries. But we know that the Judge of all the earth must do right; and that, as a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his knowledge and permission, so we are quite sure that five missionaries and their families could not be buried in the ocean without the notice and special permission of almighty God. If he chose to take them to heaven through a watery grave, rather than by a chariot of fire, his will be done! Our business is to profit by this melancholy event; and I trust that so afflictive a circumstance will not be without profit to each of us. We may also hope that this melancholy event will excite feelings of consideration in the West Indies not felt before; and that the negroes and others who have attended the ministry of those excellent men, now gone to their reward, will reflect upon their past instructions; and perhaps God may thus bring good out of evil, by stirring the people up to attend with greater diligence to the ministry of the men who may be sent in their place. I trust that the destitute society in Antigua will not long be left without a pastor; and that a number of young men will volunteer their services to fill up the ranks of those who have fallen in so sacred a warfare; and thus perhaps God may increase the number of labourers."

The particulars of this disaster, furnished by Mr. Hyde, the missionary at Montserrat, arrived soon after the meeting. They are too long to be inserted in this place; and having been detailed in a separate publication, which has been extensively read, they are generally known. They were first published in the missionary notices for July, accompanied by the following introductory remarks, written by Mr. Watson:—"The account of the late loss of our valuable and lamented brethren in the West Indies, inserted in our number for May, was necessarily brief and imperfect, both from the letters having been written immediately before the sailing of the packet, and from Mrs. Jones being then too little recovered to be able to give any particulars of the circumstances of this melancholy event. We have now received many particulars from Mr. Hyde, of Montserrat, who went over to Antigua after the news of the loss of the mail boat had reached him,

and remained there until Mrs. Jones was sufficiently recovered to communicate the painful detail. The case is in some respects a much more affecting one than we had anticipated; a part of the brethren were appointed to more lingering sufferings; but there is reason also to 'sing of *mercy*,' as well as 'of judgment;' and our friends will have the satisfaction to find that those excellent men, whose loss is so deplored, both at home and in the West Indies, exhibited in their dangers and sufferings a calmness and resignation, and a zeal for the salvation of the seamen, their fellow sufferers, worthy of their hopes as Christians, and of their characters as missionaries of Jesus Christ. Perhaps, to give this testimony to the closing scene and final conduct of these servants of God, was among the reasons why, in the providence of God, Mrs. Jones was so singularly preserved. The impression produced in the colonies where they were known has been very deep; and we doubt not that the afflictive event will be overruled for the promotion of the spiritual benefit of the societies. The account is given by Mr. Hyde in the form of extracts from his journal; in which form we think it best to preserve it, as it traces the circumstances in the order of their occurrence, and shows particularly that blessed and prepared frame of mind in which the brethren were living, and the spirit in which they engaged in their ministerial duties during the time they were detained in Montserrat, previous to their embarkation on that fatal voyage."

The year 1826 will be long remembered as a season of unexampled commercial distress. For some years the country had enjoyed considerable prosperity, and the spirit of speculation became rampant.—Joint-stock companies were formed in endless variety; and multitudes of people, dissatisfied with a moderate competency, and fondly anticipating the speedy possession of immense wealth, engaged in tempting and deceitful enterprises, embarking the whole of their property, with the addition of a fictitious capital. The consequence was, a sudden and frightful reaction. Credit was generally shaken among commercial men; a run upon the banks ensued; extensive failures occurred in all parts of the country, and in every department of business; the loss of property was incalculable; and thousands of respectable families were reduced to indigence and beggary. That the funds of the Wesleyan connection were supported with scarcely any perceptible diminution, was a surprising fact; and demonstrates the unbounded attachment of the societies to their institutions. The subscriptions and congregational collections received at the anniversary of the missionary society in April and May amounted to more than a thousand pounds; and nearly half that amount was contributed a few weeks afterward at the opening of a Methodist chapel in Manchester. Mr. Bunting at that time was stationed in the southern division of that town, where, in conjunction with his excellent colleagues, the Rev. Messrs. John Waterhouse and Peter M'Owan, he exercised a most efficient ministry. Two large chapels were built nearly at the same time, within a comparatively short distance of each other, in addition to one of similar dimensions which had been erected about six or seven years before. Mr. Watson lent his assistance at the opening of the first of these in the month of June; and before his return to London he wrote the following letter. It contains a reference to the state of the times, and gives some infor-

mation respecting his health. Mr. Walton had removed from Wakefield to Margate, where his daughter was married to Mr. Rowe.

To William Ellis, M. D., of Wakefield.

Manchester, June 19th, 1826.

My Dear Friend,—I am greatly obliged by your continued remembrance, and kind invitation. I know of nothing which would give me greater pleasure than a day or two in the society of yourself and Mrs. Ellis. Your "shrubs and walks," though I doubt not they are very thriving and beautiful, would be but a secondary motive; though my taste for nature has not, I hope, suffered by my residence in town. The pleasure of seeing you, and of being "somewhat filled with your company," is, however, one which I cannot at present command, my time being occupied by my engagements on my way back to London. The first opportunity I have, I assure you, I shall need no other inducement to renew those remembered social hours, and my unabated friendship. *For the times*, we have done well at the opening of the chapel. The collections were £442.

I have no news, except that my family, through the Divine mercy, is well, and my health better than formerly.

Mr. Walton was in London when I left. He has been ill, but is convalescent. I have had an invitation to our friends at Margate: but I have no time for mere visits; and to Kent I am seldom officially called.

Please to present my kind regards to any of my old Wakefield friends you may be in intercourse with. I deeply regret to hear of the trials of some of them. May they have a proper influence upon their minds! This has been a sad year to many worthy people in almost all parts of our connection.

Almost immediately after Mr. Watson's return to London, the missionary society sustained a severe loss in the death of one of its treasurers, Joseph Butterworth, Esq., a man of exemplary zeal and benevolence. He was the son of a dissenting minister; and his prospects, when he entered into life, were not of the most flattering and exalted kind. By the blessing of God, however, upon his talents and industry, he rose to eminence both in regard to property and influence. He was brought to a knowledge of himself and of his Saviour under the ministry of Dr. Adam Clarke, to whom he was related by marriage; and by the same means he was introduced into the Wesleyan connection. His piety was simple and unostentatious; and for many years he was the leader of a class, consisting mostly of young men, to many of whom he was rendered a means of great spiritual benefit. His principles and spirit were eminently catholic; and perhaps no man of his age possessed the confidence and affection of a greater number of good people of every denomination. To the poor his liberality was unbounded; and many an honest and industrious artisan and mechanic did he counsel in perplexity, relieve in distress, and supply with the means of establishing himself in business. Twice he was elected as a member of parliament; once for his native city of Coventry, and once for Dover.—In the senate he was independent, the undeviating friend of religious liberty, and the advocate of missions and of public morals and order.

He was connected with nearly all the great religious and philanthropic institutions of the age, and took an active part in their management.—The peculiarities of his character admirably fitted him for the office of treasurer to the Wesleyan Missionary Society. For not only did he possess a large share of the public confidence; but his liberality and holy ardour, his energy and enterprise, specially qualified him to assist in directing an institution which has extended its operations to every quarter of the globe, and has been honoured by God with pre-eminent success. Mr. Butterworth was not a man to be satisfied with low and subordinate aims; nor was he daunted by opposition and difficulties.—His generous mind sympathized with the wants of universal man; and his love to the human race, and zeal for the Saviour's glory, prompted him to urge forward his less ardent colleagues in their career of usefulness, and to embrace every providential opening to extend the light and salvation of the Gospel to regions previously unvisited by the messengers of truth. After attending a contested election at Dover, in which he was an unsuccessful candidate, he returned home in a state of great exhaustion, and, as he stated to a friend, with a pure and untroubled conscience. His health, which for a considerable time had been delicate, entirely failed; and in a few days he died, in the faith and hope of the Gospel. His remains were interred under the City-Road chapel; and an elegant monument to his memory ornaments that house of prayer, of which he was a trustee. His epitaph, written with great spirit, and embracing the principal points of his character and personal history, was the composition of Dr. Adam Clarke.

At the request of Mr. Butterworth's executors Mr. Watson attended the funeral of this eminent man, and improved the event of his decease by a sermon which he preached at the Wesleyan chapel in Great Queen-street; the place of worship which Mr. Butterworth was accustomed to attend. This discourse was afterward published under the following title:—"A Sermon on the Death of Joseph Butterworth, Esq., late M. P. for Dover: preached at Great Queen-street Chapel, on Sunday, July 9th, 1826." Mr. Butterworth was no ordinary man; and the sermon is almost entirely occupied in the developement of his character. The text, which is Gal. i, 24, "And they glorified God in me," is used merely as a motto, and as suggesting a few introductory observations. The discourse was prepared with a reference to publication, and was read by Mr. Watson from the pulpit, to a large and respectable congregation. At the conclusion of the service he remarked to a friend, that the plan which he had been led to adopt was not "the most excellent way" in cases of this nature; and that it would have been more congenial with his own feelings, and more conducive to the edification of the people, had he followed the general usages of the Methodist body, by preaching extempore, and connecting his account of the deceased with a discourse upon some appropriate branch of evangelical truth. The sermon was immediately committed to the press, and had an extensive circulation.

This is a truly eloquent publication, and contains many passages of great power and beauty; but its great excellence arises from the important principles, on the subject of religion and morals, which it so fearlessly avows and so ably defends. No man had a higher regard for the British senate than Mr. Watson; yet as a Christian he could

not be blind to the evils which have been tolerated there. "How much every public man," says he, "is liable to misrepresentation and unfounded censure we all know. This is a tax he must pay, in the present state of society, whatever his character may be, good or bad; whether his motives be patriotic or selfish. But the truly Christian patriot will not escape so well as others; for with all the hopes we may entertain of the advance of religious influence in our country, (and we have great reason to glorify God on this behalf,) we are not arrived at that state when the principles and claims of the Christianity of the Scriptures can be fully urged and advocated in the high places of society, and the seats of legislation, without exposing the men who fearlessly place themselves on this lofty ground, to a more than common share of rebuke. And yet we applaud our civil institutions, and with reason; but they are the results of a strict regard to the principles and spirit of our religion among our ancestors; which in these times would entitle their very founders, whom we profess to hold in admiration, to the sneering appellation of 'saints,' and the contemptuous badge of 'fanatics.' Had not the spirit as well as the name of religion acquired a deep hold upon the hearts and consciences of many of our ancient statesmen, they would not have struggled with so quenchless a heroism for those religious liberties on which mainly is built and secured the fortress of our civil freedom. And yet the infidelity or heartless Christianity of the day shall affect to turn with contempt upon those who would excite the same principles into activity, and who act upon them with the same serious conviction of their truth. 'Ye hypocrites, ye build the tombs of the prophets; and yet stone them that are sent unto you,' in the same spirit, and with the same commission.

"We may indeed look with gratitude, and even with admiration, upon the legislature of our country. It embodies in it more of honour, of integrity, of public spirit, of practical wisdom, than any body of similar functions in the world; or perhaps, taking its history from the beginning, than any other that ever existed; and it comprehends men of a high and truly Christian character: but the influence of Christianity upon it as a whole is to be considered rather as reflex than direct; rather received from the country, than emanating from itself. We dare not compromise truth so far as not to allow that it is in many respects far below its just standard, as the legislature of a nation professing the religion of the Bible. Who shall rise up in his place there, for instance, to propose to strengthen the laws against those fashionable murders called duels, without hearing them defended on principles which scarcely an enlightened heathen would tolerate? or to propose a stricter enforcement of the Sabbath of the Lord, without being branded as a Puritan? or to suppress our barbarous and brutalizing gladiatorial spectacles, without hearing them advocated as necessary to promote the courage and the character of a *Christian* populace? or to plead the rights of animals to protection from cruelty, without being met by indifference or contempt? And, to go to higher and graver subjects, can we forget the long and difficult struggle, even in a British legislature, which it cost to abolish the traffic in slaves; and the insults heaped upon the honoured men who at last achieved that victory of humanity and principle? With what lingering and

obstructed steps does the case of the colonial slave still drag itself onward into notice and advocacy! Grant that this great cause makes progress; yet is it not humbling, deeply humbling, to us, that we, whose feet have been so 'swift to shed blood,' should be so slow to show mercy? We might enlarge the instances, but it is unnecessary.—I have adverted to these topics, not to feed faction,—for under any form which politicians may give to the legislature of a country, it must always be the epitome and the reflecting mirror of the country's own moral state,—but to remind you, that he who applies himself most diligently to infuse moral health into society is the highest patriot; and that, even in this age and country, the man who engages in public affairs avowedly on Christian principles must stand prepared to endure reproach for their sake."

On the death of Mr. Butterworth, his friend Lancelot Haslope, Esq., was requested to accept the office of treasurer to the Wesleyan Missionary Society; an office for which he was well qualified by his Christian zeal and liberality, and his sound judgment and discretion.—The institution owes much to his fidelity, and unwearied attention to its interests.

The conference of 1826 was held in Liverpool. It commenced on the 26th of July; and on the first morning of its assembling Mr. Watson received, in his election to the office of president, a substantial proof of the confidence and esteem of his brethren. He had justly merited that distinction by the valuable and important services which he had rendered to the body; and the honour was conferred upon him with great unanimity, and with the most cordial affection. Every one seemed to feel a thrill of gratification when he took possession of the chair, and delivered a short address, remarkable for its modesty and propriety. Through the whole conference his mind appeared to be under a special Divine influence; and his official conduct presented a remarkable admixture of Christian dignity and brotherly kindness.—It may be proper to state, that the conference regularly holds three sittings every day, and often a fourth when it is occupied by an unusual press of business; that each of these sittings is begun and ended with prayer; and that the brethren who engage in these acts of devotion generally commend to the Divine blessing the president and other officers, upon whom the labour and care of business more immediately rest. Mr. Watson remarked in conversation, that so far as he was concerned, those prayers appeared to be answered; and that improved health, and a hallowed cheerfulness and recollection of spirit, were the happy result. "It seems," said he to the writer of this narrative, "that I am benefited by those good prayers which are daily offered up by the brethren in my behalf." That there might be neither confusion nor delay in regard to the singing, with which prayer in the conference is always connected, he requested the Rev. William Hill, who was an adept in music, to lead the tunes; and the devotions of the conference were remarkable for their spirituality, and the gracious influence by which they were accompanied. In one instance it was his painful duty to administer censure; and the impression produced by the force of his remarks upon the aggravations and consequences of sin in a minister of the Gospel, can scarcely ever be effaced from the minds of those who witnessed the impressive scene.

After his election to the president's chair, he addressed the following letters to Mrs. Watson:—

Liverpool, Wednesday.

My Dearest Mary,—This morning the honour I sought not was laid upon me,—that of president. May I have health and grace to discharge its duties to the satisfaction of the brethren! It is a great trial to the feelings for the first day or two, you may be sure; but the election was honourable. This mark of the confidence of the preachers gives me support.

Give my love to the dear children. I cannot write much, as all my time will be occupied; but I am ever

Yours most truly and affectionately.

Liverpool, Thursday.

My Dearest Mary,—The pressure of my office, morning, noon, and night, has prevented me from writing again; and now I write amidst calls on the right hand, left, and centre, "Mr. President;" "Mr. President;" "I wish to say;" and, "I beg to observe," &c.—All I can say is, that I fear we shall not conclude the conference very soon. I thank God, that, in the midst of great heat, fatigue, and long hours, I have been kept in tolerable health.

With love to Mary and Tom, in haste.

Mr. Watson's sermon before the conference was delivered on the Sunday evening, in the Brunswick chapel, and was one of his happiest efforts. It was founded upon Dan. xii, 13, "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days;" and had a special reference to the preachers who had departed this life in the course of the year, twenty-four in number. "The end of the days" he described as the end of time, when every faithful servant of the Lord shall stand in his own lot or inheritance. His remarks upon the subject of immortality, viewed in connection with the present probationary state of men, and future retribution, were particularly striking. Having spoken, in his own inimitable manner, of the end of time, and the dissolution of the universe, he described the soul of man as "reposing upon its own immortality;" and exclaimed, "Why do we not reverence ourselves more, and live in a manner becoming our exalted hopes, when we are assured by the testimony of the living God, that we shall not only survive the wreck of matter, but retain our conscious being through everlasting ages?" The application of this subject to his brethren in the ministry supplied topics of admonition, of the most stirring and influential kind. The preacher seemed scarcely less than a messenger from the world of spirits, sent to warn all present of what awaited them in a future state; and especially to remind those who were entrusted with the care of immortal souls, of their fearful responsibility, and the consequent necessity of vigilance and fidelity; that when, like Daniel, they should be dismissed from their work, they might receive a great and everlasting reward. The conference, by a unanimous vote, requested him to publish this sermon; but he could not be prevailed upon to comply with their wishes.

The beginning and conclusion of every conference are usually

seasons of peculiar solemnity. When the preachers meet after an interval of twelve months, the places of some beloved and venerated men, who had long been recognized in those annual assemblies are generally found to be empty. The ravages which have been made by death often awaken the most serious and tender emotions; and the startling inquiry comes with power to many a heart,

"Who next shall be summon'd away,
My merciful God, is it I?"

When the last vote of the conference has been passed, and the journal is signed by the president and secretary, the preachers, the great body of whom are perfectly one in affection and judgment, prepare to separate, in the certain anticipation of never all meeting again till they appear before the Judge of quick and dead. After receiving the Lord's Supper together, and commending each other to God in earnest prayer, they depart to their several scenes of labour, often with tears, and always with mutual benedictions, and in the earnest hope of meeting in a world where

"Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown."

At the conclusion of the conference in Liverpool Mr. Watson prayed with great enlargement and fervour, and at considerable length. He prayed for the preservation of the preachers in their several journeyings; for the continuance of their health and lives; the success of their ministry through the year; the general prosperity of the work of God; the peace and harmony of the societies; and the conversion to the faith of Christ of "a great multitude" of people in all parts of the land. The missionaries, "separated from their brethren," and labouring in different parts of the heathen world, and in the midst of great discouragements and trials, were particularly remembered, and commended to the blessing and merciful protection of God. There was one subject in this prayer which seemed to rest with peculiar weight upon Mr. Watson's mind, and to which he gave considerable prominence. It was the case of the preachers who at that time had become supernumeraries. Several aged men, who had long borne the burden and heat of the day, and been accustomed to active service in various parts of the connection, were compelled by infirmities to retire from the labours of their itinerant ministry, and become stationary. With these venerable servants of Christ he appeared deeply to sympathize. Their circumstances were now greatly altered, and they were liable to strong and distressing temptations. In some instances they were likely to be straitened in their income, and means of subsistence; and in every case, to retire into comparative obscurity. They would, therefore, be in danger of considering themselves slighted, and of yielding to a querulous disposition. From this he prayed that they might be preserved; that the evening of life with them might be calm and tranquil; their usefulness continued; and that their lives of pious and honourable toil might be crowned with a peaceful end, and a glorious reward. The deep feeling which he manifested in this part of his prayer was admirably characteristic of the affection and respect with which he was accustomed to regard aged Christians, and especially aged ministers, and reflected the highest honour upon his principles and temper.

During the conference he lodged at the house of his faithful and tried friends, Mr. and Mrs. Kaye; where many of his brethren met him, and enjoyed his conversation, which was bland, instructive, and devout.

As the president of the conference, it was Mr. Watson's duty through the year to supply, from the preachers who were on the list of reserve, any vacancies that might occur in the different circuits by death, sickness, or other causes. He felt the responsibility of his situation; and in this, as well as in every other part of his duty, he was careful to serve the connection in the best manner. In appointing young men to different circuits, he availed himself of the opportunity, to suggest to them advices which were calculated to be of essential service to them in future life. One of his letters, addressed to a promising young man, is subjoined as a specimen of his spirit and manner. It is laconic, but important.

London, August 16th, 1826.

My Dear Sir,—You will be kind enough to proceed to assist Mr. ——— as soon after the 24th instant as possible, so as to be there by Sunday the 27th. As your expenses will be paid by a sick preacher, you will see the propriety of travelling as frugally as possible; and in entering upon this work give yourself wholly to it, and to the Lord. Be a diligent student of the Scriptures, and of the theology of the heart. Avoid the frippery rhetoric which some affect; and aim at being Wesleyan, which is your calling. Remember that your business is not to shine, but to win souls.

During the year of his presidency Mr. Watson still retained his connection with the Wesleyan Missionary Society, though the duties of the secretaryship ostensibly devolved upon other men; and in the month of October he repaired to Leeds, to assist at the anniversary of the auxiliary society for that district. His sermons and speeches produced their usual impression, though his health had again begun to fail, and he was in a very languid state. Before he left Leeds he addressed the following letter to Mrs. Watson:—

Wednesday.

My Dearest Mary,—I bore the journey pretty well; but the affection in my chest continued; and preaching on Sunday, and both preaching and speaking on Monday, in this immense chapel, quite laid me up; so that I have been in the house all to-day and yesterday. I am, however, thank God, so much better as to be able to proceed to Manchester to-morrow; though I fear I shall keep the affection in my chest some days longer. However, I trust in God. I have been most kindly nursed at Mr. Scarth's.

I have purchased as much cloth as will make you and Mary each a cloak; and I hope you will think I have made a good bargain. I trust Mary and Tom are diligently improving their time. Give my love to both. I am greatly exhausted, and long for home.

His friend Dr. Ellis, of Wakefield, advised him to rest for some days; and invited him to his own residence for that purpose. But he had engaged to preach at the opening of a large new chapel at Sal-

ford, and he was unwilling to disappoint the hopes of his friends in that place. He fulfilled his engagement, in the best manner he was able; and then his strength entirely failed; so that he was unable, for some time, to bear the journey home to London. Under these circumstances he addressed the subjoined letter

To William Ellis, M. D., of Wakefield.

Manchester, Oct. 14th, 1826.

My Dear Friend,—You predicted right, that I should be laid up. I, however, made an effort to open the chapel at Salford, and am not materially worse, though I have retarded the efficacy of the means used at Leeds for throwing off my cold.

I am greatly obliged by your kindness and invitation; and had I not felt it to be an imperative duty to proceed to Salford, I should have availed myself of it. Whether I shall reach you on this journey, or not, is uncertain; because I am not yet again in travelling trim; but if I can find the time to go home by Wakefield, after the 22d, I will do so; and I assure you that it will be to me a great pleasure to enjoy again a social hour with you and Mrs. Ellis. Many painful changes have, however, I fear, taken place in Wakefield, even since I was last there.

Such is earth; and happiest they who have a hold, fast and supporting, on that which never fails human trust, and transcends, never sinks below the measure of our hope!

My best regards to Mrs. Ellis, and to your son.

Under all his bodily infirmities Mr. Watson's mind retained its activity and vigour; and at the end of the present year he published the fourth part of his Theological Institutes, which completed the second volume of that work. He had already established, upon the basis of Scripture authority, the depravity, helplessness, and guilt of the human race; and he here proceeds to exhibit the provision which has been graciously made for their salvation. If man is guilty, he needs justification; and how a sinner can be justified in the sight of God, consistently with the claims of law, and the Divine attribute of infinite justice, is a question which human wisdom has never been able to solve. If in every instance he can be justified on the ground of mere mercy, the authority of law is at an end, and the sanctions of law are an idle dream. The same objection lies against the notion, that sinners can be justified by mere penitence. That God is just, and that it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands, is not only manifest from the denunciations of Holy Scripture, but from the terrible calamities which have been inflicted upon mankind in every age, and from which they have been unable to escape. "How, then, can" sinful "man be justified with God?" One great design of revelation is to answer this most momentous of all inquiries, by presenting to the view and confidence of mankind the atonement of Christ in all its efficacy and value. Into the nature of that atonement Mr. Watson carefully inquires; and he has brought out the evidence which the Holy Scriptures contain in favour of this vital article of the Christian faith in a manner the most striking and conclusive, and refutes the objections which modern skepticism has urged against it. In the prosecution of his argument he

endeavours, in the first place, to ascertain the principles of God's moral government, as laid down by himself in the Scriptures; and by this means he proves the necessity of the atonement, as a demonstration of the justice of God. He next shows that the death of Christ was propitiatory; and that both the sacrifices of the law, and the sacrifices of the patriarchal times, are to be regarded as types of the sacrificial death of Christ, and confirm this view of the subject. Many important disquisitions are introduced in connection with the main argument, on the origin of sacrifices, and other collateral subjects, in which great powers of reasoning are displayed, and much valuable criticism is embodied.

Having established the doctrine of atonement for sin by the death of Christ, Mr. Watson proceeds to consider the benefits which result from that atonement; particularly justification and adoption; with the nature of that inward witness to his adoption which the Holy Spirit vouchsafes to the believer. Into the question of justification, and that of the witness of the Spirit, he enters at considerable length, and with great force of argument. His views of justification were substantially those of John Goodwin, Mr. Wesley, and other divines of the same school; and he strenuously opposes the Antinomian theory of justification by the imputation of Christ's personal righteousness; and the scheme of Bishop Bull, that sinners are justified before God by faith and works, or by faith considered as the root and principle of evangelical obedience. The witness of the Spirit, he contends, is direct and immediate; and confirms this view of the subject by the combined testimony of several theological writers of the highest authority.

Pursuing the doctrine of atonement through its practical consequences, Mr. Watson connects the death of Christ with the entire process of human salvation. It is through this medium that the preventing grace of God, which waiteth not for the call of man, and all the means of religious instruction and salvation, are vouchsafed. The ungodly are justified "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" by the same means they "receive the adoption of sons," and "the promise of the Spirit through faith." The intercession of our High Priest is founded upon his meritorious sacrifice; this is the means of all access to God in acts of religious worship; and "eternal life" itself "is the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER XX.

Missionary Report for 1826—Letter to Mrs. Watson—Mr. Watson's Visit to Scotland—Letter to Mrs. Watson from Glasgow—Mr. Watson visits Cornwall and Ireland—Letter to Mrs. Watson—Attends the Conference in Manchester in 1827—Letters to Mrs. Watson—Delivers an Address to the Young Preachers—The most useful kind of Preaching—Mr. Watson's Appointment to Manchester—Private Studies—Ministry—Conduct as a Superintendent and Christian Pastor—Sermon against a Musical Festival—Personal Character—Attention to his Circuit.

EARLY in the year 1827 the annual report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, which was drawn up by Mr. Watson, was published for the benefit of the subscribers. It announced a slight defalcation in

the funds, in consequence of the deep commercial distress in which the country was then plunged; but its details were, in other respects, calculated to call forth expressions of gratitude, and to inspire the most animating hopes. The following facts will give some idea of the extent of the society's operations:—

"The total number of principal mission stations in different parts of the world is one hundred and thirty-seven; and the number of missionaries employed, upward of one hundred and eighty, exclusive of catechists, &c. The number of members in our foreign societies is thirty-two thousand nine hundred and sixty; of whom twenty-six thousand two hundred and eighty-three are negroes and people of colour in the West India colonies. The aggregate number of children in the mission schools cannot be stated with accuracy. Since a former sheet was printed, the school report for Ceylon and Continental India has arrived, which states the number of children, at present in the schools, to be four thousand one hundred and thirteen. Upward of five thousand children are stated, in the reports, to be taught in regular schools in the West Indies; but as to several schools in some of the islands, the number of scholars is not given; and in all the stations a very considerable number of children are instructed catechetically, by the missionaries who are not in schools. The advance of school instruction in these colonies is exceedingly pleasing and hopeful, and especially considering the numerous difficulties with which these institutions have there to contend. They are all for the most part very recent, but their number and moral influence afford the strongest motives to support and extend them. Upon the negro population of the West Indies they must ultimately make, in conjunction with increased religious endeavours, a most beneficial impression.

"The returns of numbers from the schools in New South Wales, South Africa, and British America, are also imperfect. The number of scholars actually reported in the mission schools generally is upward of ten thousand; to which from one thousand five hundred to two thousand may perhaps be added, as the number not reported."

The report states that no less than thirty missionaries, most of whom were married, had been sent out in the course of the year.

The income of the society for the year was £45,380. 17*s.* 2*d.* After making this statement, the report concludes in the following eloquent and pious strain:—

"The committee cannot but make this report of the amount of the contributions of the year, with the deepest feelings of gratitude. That in a year of unexampled pressure upon the interests of the country, and of widely extended distress, the amount should have fallen short of that of the last year by only a few hundred pounds, has certainly most pleasingly disappointed the anticipations of the committee. The satisfaction is heightened by recollecting that the receipts of the year preceding had been greatly advanced, so that the contributions of the present year, distressful as it has been, have exceeded any former, the year 1825 only excepted, by several thousand pounds. Nothing can more satisfactorily mark the strength of that interest which has been excited throughout our country, in the great and holy enterprises and hopes of the missionary cause; and no circumstance can afford a stronger pledge that, when prosperity shall again be shed upon our

country by Him on whom all our blessings depend, it will, by no inconsiderable portion of our fellow countrymen, be hallowed by renewed efforts to evangelize the world, and to diffuse the glory of his name. The committee are happy to remark, that in those places where the public distress has been less felt, exertions have been made during the year to increase the proceeds of their auxiliary societies, as if in prudent anticipation that many of their brethren in other districts, while they retained the will, would lack the ability, to equal their former liberality in behalf of a perishing world; and to the praiseworthy exertions of these less suffering parts of the country, the present very satisfactory report of the receipts is owing. In several even of the distressed districts, the committee mention it to the honour of the liberality of the people, and the activity of the collectors and officers of the societies, that the deficiencies have been but small, and that they have been large only where the population has been, to a very great extent, and for a long period, thrown entirely out of employment.

"In conclusion, the committee take the liberty to call the attention of the society, not only to that which has been accomplished by this and other similar societies, but to that which remains to be effected; and especially to those still destitute myriads of our fellow creatures, whom colonization and commerce have brought within the reach of our endeavours, and crowded around or brought within the wide-spread borders of the British empire. There is, doubtless, great reason to exult in the monuments of success, and in the trophies of conquest, which Christian missions have, in these later times, and especially within the last half century, erected in so many lands;—in the breakings of those dark clouds which for ages have overhung the sister kingdom, and through which the beams of heavenly truth at length begin to pour their vital radiance upon a people whose hearts are expanding to receive them;—in the rekindling of those lamps of evangelical truth in the Protestant Churches of the continent which have been so long extinguished, and the stirrings of the once mighty spirit of the reformation, so long rocked to slumber by a false and insidious philosophy;—in the visitation of the regions of slavery and degradation by the commiserations, the consolations, and the better hopes of Christianity;—in the introduction of our Divine religion into the regions of degraded Africa, where she has led up in her train agriculture, and arts, and laws, and literally converted 'the desert into a fruitful field,' and Hottentot kraals into Christian villages, with their schools of learning, and their humble but consecrated temples of worship;—in the incipient triumphs of the mild and merciful spirit of the Gospel, over the rude and sanguinary habits of the savages of the South Seas;—in the impression made upon the closely-compacted idolatry, and the obstacle of caste in India. Nevertheless it is yet true, awfully and emphatically true, that 'the world lieth in wickedness;' for such is the vastness of that majority which is still under the dominion of error, superstition, and vice, as almost to annihilate in our consideration the comparatively few, who, by the hand of mercy, have been rescued from the gulf which has drawn down the millions of past ages below the reach of hope; and which still whirls within its deepening eddies the millions of the present, to rescue whom no helping hand is near. Our grateful exultation is not forbidden; for this is for the honour of

our Saviour, the Author of all the good which has been effected, and the only object on whom hope, as to the future, can rest: but with this joy let us mingle the deepest sympathies, and yield up our hearts to more tender and stirring anxieties. The case of an alienated, a perishing world, is under our eye, and we cannot avoid seeing it. Our colonies carry us to the scene; our commerce wafts us to it; our enterprising travellers expand it before us in its length and breadth of wretchedness; and, what is more, the empire of our country opens the high road to the march of our practical compassion, and thus, by giving us the 'opportunity' to 'do good,' literally, to almost 'all men,' renders that the high vocation of British Christians, and binds it upon us as one of our most solemn duties. This duty has been largely recognized and acted upon; but there remain many hearts among the professed Christians of this country, still insensible to the obligation; hearts which never thrilled with these sacred sympathies, and never glowed with the sublime anticipation of the universal reign of our adored Saviour.—Greatly as our missionary exertions are outrunning the means, liberal as they are, which are provided for their support, it might be comparatively hopeless to expect, from the majority of our friends, that their contributions should be greatly increased; and the temporary pressure of the times may, in some degree, affect the receipts of the next year: but there are large and unexplored resources around us; and he who, by his arguments, his example, and the activity with which he spreads those publications which bring the real condition of the world, and the cheering progress of salvation among the heathen, under the notice of the public, wins another heart to embrace this sacred cause, at once opens to its affections new and sanctifying interests, and secures additional aid in promotion of its glorious designs. So long as this is felt to be a sacred duty our resources cannot diminish, and will surmount the temporary shocks of national adversity itself. We shall then see bands of holy men in greater number and frequency leave our shores, to enterprise labours for Christ and the souls of men, more arduous, more lofty, and more distant;—we shall trace them, as they push their unstained and noiseless conquests deeper and wider into the yet unpenetrated empires of superstition and idolatry, into the central regions of Africa, now for the first time opening to the distant view of Christendom,—to those seats of eternal ice and regions of storm, which, as they witnessed the unshrinking courage of the British mariner, shall be braved as nobly by the breast of the British missionary,—into those yet unpenetrated living masses of immortal men which thicken in the teeming countries of the east, where superstition first began to wield her fearful sceptre, and where it shall fall powerless and shivered from her hand amidst the shouts of liberated millions. While we live on earth, if we are faithful to our high vocation, we shall pursue these hallowed triumphs; and we shall leave this work in unimpaired energy, to hasten on that result which shall stamp the seal of eternal truth upon every jot and tittle of the sacred volume; to brighten the splendour of the prophetic page into still more glorious history, and to fulfil 'that mystery of God,' that consummation over which earth with all her tongues, and heaven with all her choirs beatified, shall roll the triumphant notes and the lofty swell of the final anthem,—'HALLELUJAH, FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH.'"

The conference of 1826 appointed Mr. Watson, with the Rev. Messrs. Jabez Bunting, George Marsden, and Robert Newton, a committee, to prepare a plan for the more efficient management of the Sunday schools belonging to the connection. It was felt that those valuable institutions ought to be every where regarded as strictly religious in their character; and that they should be carried on under the more immediate direction and control of the Church. The admirable plan which they formed, and the principles upon which it was founded, were laid before the conference of 1827, and cordially adopted by that body. The committee met in Manchester; and on Mr. Watson's arrival at the house of James Heald, Esq., near Stockport, he addressed the following letter to Mrs. Watson:—

Parr's Wood, Saturday.

My Dearest Mary,—I arrived here yesterday; and, by God's blessing, am not the worse for my journey; although I have been troubled with a succession of colds. They have troubled, but not injured me; and if I get through as well, I shall be thankful. The weather is, however, changeable and cold. I was starved almost to stiffness in the coach yesterday, in passing over the Derbyshire hills. They were all covered deep with snow; and we were obliged to have six horses to drag us along.

My journey has been as follows:—Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, I spent at Melton. I had two nieces of the duke of Rutland to hear me twice, who sent to beg an outline of my cherubim sermon. On Monday I had a thorough religious gossip; breakfasted with a party at one house; dined at another; took tea at another; supped at a fourth It was a terrible hard day, both as to eating and talking.—On Tuesday night I came to Derby; Wednesday, Ashbourne; Thursday, Derby again; where I saw many old friends, and spent another pleasant day.

This is all my news hitherto. I shall, all being well, remain at Stockport till Tuesday morning; then visit Manchester and Liverpool; but whether I shall get home before Sunday, the 28th, I cannot say. You know, however, that the sooner I see you, the happier I shall be.

Love to Mary and Tom, who, I hope, are diligent in the improvement of time. May they both earnestly choose that good part which shall not be taken away from them! There is a blessed work among young people in all the places I have visited, which makes me long the more for their becoming decided. They have my daily prayers.

In the summer of 1827 Mr. Watson visited Edinburgh, attended by his friend Mr. Bunting, according to the arrangement of conference, to meet the preachers stationed in Scotland. On his arrival in Glasgow he wrote as follows to Mrs. Watson:—

Glasgow, May 19th, 1827.

My Dearest Mary,—Through the Divine goodness, I reached this place in safety; and here I am among "the blue bonnets over the border."

At Liverpool I found all as usual. On Wednesday morning, embarked on board the Majestic steam packet. Wind brisk;—few passengers;—had a fine sail to the Isle of Man;—put some passengers

ashore in boats in a heavy swell ;—started off, running along the island, mountainous and barren ;—wind freshened, and plenty of tossing ;—qualmish, but not sick ;—made a good dinner and tea ;—turned into my berth for the night, about ten o'clock ;—vessel rolling finely ;—rocked as in a cradle ;—timbers creaking, and waves dashing on the sides ;—afraid of being rolled out on the floor, which prevented sleep ;—went on deck at midnight ;—blowing a gale ;—dark ;—slunk down again ;—slept till five ;—got up ;—went on deck ;—just passing a high rocky island in the sea, and the Scottish coast in sight ;—stormy and rainy ;—dozed on a sofa in the cabin till eight ;—at nine breakfasted ;—refreshed ;—wind abated, and the motion of the vessel allowed us to walk the deck ;—entered the Frith of Clyde ;—noble scenery on each hand ; the isles of Arran and Bute ;—the western highland mountains on the left ;—the lowland country on the right ;—all the way up the Clyde, for fifty miles, very varied, often picturesque, sometimes sublime.—Neither myself nor Mr. and Mrs. Bunting were sick, but a little queer now and then. Glasgow is a fine city, on the whole ; but not quite equal to my expectations. Edinburgh will prove much superior, I hear, though not so large. I am in very comfortable quarters, and to-morrow (Sunday) preach twice. The women here run about without stockings and shoes ; and the men of the lower class chiefly wear the Scotch bonnet.

I am pretty well ; and, unless I change my mind, shall return by sea from Leith to London. Love to Mary and Tom.

The anniversary of the Auxiliary Missionary Society was held at Edinburgh, during Mr. Watson's stay ; and he lent his assistance on the occasion, both by preaching before the society, and delivering an address at the public meeting. After finishing his business in Scotland, he returned to London. From thence he repaired to Cornwall, having been officially called upon to assist in the adjustment of some differences in one of the circuits ; and in this work of love he was happily successful. From Cornwall he sailed to Dublin, where he wrote the following letter, which he addressed to Mrs. Watson :—

Dublin, Monday evening.

My Dearest Mary,—By the date you will see that I have reached the celebrated *Toplin* in safety : thanks to a kind Providence ! I travelled all night to Exeter, without much fatigue, and arrived about eight on the Sunday morning. In the forenoon I attended the cathedral, heard prayers, and singing in full style, and a sermon, the poorest morsel ever issued from a pulpit. I arrived at Truro on Monday evening ; and employed all the time from then till Thursday noon on the perplexed and difficult business which called me there. On Friday I preached at Falmouth, expecting that the steam packet would reach that port from London on Saturday morning. She did not, however, arrive till Saturday evening ; when I embarked, and arrived here this evening ; having spent two nights at sea. The voyage was, however, very fine and calm, and I slept well. This evening I have taken my place for Belfast, in the mail ; and, if it please God, I shall arrive there to-morrow evening.

Thus I have been preserved in health, safety, and peace ; and, by the same good hand of God upon me, I hope to see you again in due

season, without injury. Of Ireland I have scarcely had a taste yet, and can say nothing.

My kindest love to Mary and Tom; who, I hope, are zealously pursuing useful studies; and who, I trust, will add to these that good part which shall not be taken away from them. If it please God, I shall write to you from Belfast.

I am your ever affectionate husband.

The object of Mr. Watson's visit to Belfast was, to attend the Irish conference in that town. Here his ministry, his counsel, his conversation, his entire spirit and example, were greatly admired by the preachers and friends, and were made a lasting blessing to many. He was often requested to visit Ireland again, but was prevented by ill health.

From Belfast Mr. Watson repaired to Manchester, to attend the English conference. On his arrival in Manchester he addressed the following letter to Mrs. Watson:—

Manchester, Friday.

My Dearest Mary,—I arrived safely here, by the good providence of God, last evening. I left Belfast on Wednesday afternoon; and, after a pleasant voyage, arrived in Liverpool on Thursday morning to breakfast; and then proceeded here. It has greatly disappointed me, that I could not reach home; but, as I could not have been with you till Saturday, and must have left again on Monday morning, it would not have been worth the labour and expense; and, indeed, I was afraid to hazard the fatigue. I must abide here, therefore, in patience till the conference closes.

We finished the Irish conference on Monday night; but there was no steam vessel till Wednesday; so that on Tuesday I went up the country, and spent a pleasant day at Lurgan, about eighteen miles inland from Belfast; passed through Moira, the town from which the earl of Moira took his title, and where there was a fine family estate, until sold by the late marquis. Upon the whole, I liked the trip to Ireland very much; but was glad enough to see the shores of England rising in the horizon. The pleasure would have been heightened, had I been able to proceed direct home, instead of remaining here for a month longer; but I must submit. There is much to be thankful for,—preservation in travel, and a tolerable degree of health.

Please write to me immediately, and say how you all are. Best love to you all.

Having presided in the preparatory committees, on the first day of the conference he resigned his office, and received the very cordial thanks of his brethren for the part which he had acted through the year. Some of the official duties which devolved upon him were at once difficult and painful; but he executed his trust so as to command the decided approbation of his brethren, and preserve the rules and order of the body inviolate. His general health, though delicate, was superior to what it had been some time previously; and his spirit, during the conference, was eminently cheerful and devout. He lodged at the house of his friend James Wood, Esq., where he received the kindest and most respectful attention from every part of the family; and his conversation was a perpetual source of instruction and hallowed

pleasure. The company, from day to day, seemed to hang upon his lips; and to minister to their happiness evidently increased his own. The occasion can never be forgotten, while any member of the family, or of its inmates, survives.

When the conference assembled, and he was superseded in his office as president, he addressed the following letter to Mrs. Watson:—

Manchester.

My Dearest Mary,—This morning I was happily relieved from my onerous office; and was succeeded by Mr. Stephens. I received a hearty vote of thanks for my conduct in the presidency.

All things seem to open our way to Manchester South; which, I hope, is in the overruling of that gracious Providence which has hitherto, however unworthy, very graciously guided us all our days. For myself, I am quite satisfied with this appointment; and I doubt not but you will be so too. If God give me sufficient health, all will, I think, be well; but health and all things are in the hands of our blessed God.—He will guide us.

I trust your health is improved. Make your preparations for removal by little and little, so as not to fatigue yourself. My kindest love to yourself and children. I am, my dearest Mary,

Yours most truly and affectionately.

As the ex-president, it fell to Mr. Watson's lot to deliver the charge to the preachers who were that year received into full ministerial connection with the conference. According to the usages of the body, they had remained four years upon trial; and having passed acceptably through their several examinations, they were solemnly recognized by their brethren as ministers of Christ; they were commended to the Divine blessing in fervent prayer; and then addressed on the subject of their duties and responsibilities. The discourse delivered by Mr. Watson was every way worthy of himself, and of the occasion. It was founded upon 2 Tim. i, 7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." The conference requested its publication by a unanimous vote; and it soon after appeared, under the title of "An Address delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. John Bell, Jonathan Crowther, and others, at the Conference of Wesleyan Methodist Ministers, held in Manchester, August, 1827. Published by request of the Conference." Ordination Mr. Watson considered to be the solemn and official separation of men from secular business, and appointment to the duties of the Christian ministry, whether attended by the imposition of hands or not. The imposition of hands he regarded as a Scriptural rite, and one which ought not therefore to be omitted; but he looked upon it rather as a circumstance connected with ordination, calculated to render it more impressive, than as constituting ordination itself. Though the rite in question is not used by the Wesleyan conference, in the appointment of men to the sacred ministry,—a fact which Mr. Watson and several of his brethren have regretted,—he did not hesitate to apply the term ordination to the service, on occasion of which his discourse was delivered. The text he regards as descriptive of those supernatural endowments with which every true minister of Christ is invested; endowments which are not the result of physical constitution, nor of study and discipline, but the

gift of God, through the agency of the Holy Spirit. "Power" he explains as signifying "virtue," or "courage," "as opposed to timidity and cowardice." It is required, as Mr. Watson very forcibly shows, both in preaching the word, and maintaining order and discipline in the Church.

"A sound mind," Mr. Watson remarks, "will show itself in the pre-eminence which the preacher will give in his studies and ministry, to that truth which he is appointed to teach." Thus he speaks concerning that philosophic mode of preaching which a writer of modern times has recommended:—"You are professedly feeders of souls to spiritual strength, and religious maturity; and you must never forget, that the soul has no aliment for moral ends but the word of God. It has indeed been argued in a somewhat popular book on physico-theology, not long ago published, that the listlessness with which sermons are often attended arises from their having in them so little to excite the attention; and in the view of this author, they would be greatly improved, and piety would become at once more rational and more ardent, if preachers would more largely study the various branches of intellectual and natural philosophy, and make them the frequent theme of their discourses. From this practice, it is believed, deeper interest would be produced in our hearers, and more powerful effects would result. This opinion may be more than doubted; it will not certainly bear the application of the rule of the apostle just mentioned; for there would be in this practice no 'distribution of the word of truth,' and no consequent feeding of souls. The abstract speculations of the metaphysician scarcely produce any unequivocal conviction of the judgment, and must fall, therefore, powerless upon the heart; and as to the works of God in the natural world, a very superficial knowledge of them is all that is necessary for purposes of devotion. David was not a philosopher; at least the astronomy of modern times was unknown to him; but all the reach of Newton's calculations could not have increased that impression of pious and humble adoration which a popular glance of the starry heavens awakened in his prepared mind. He exclaims, 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?' But had this reflection been the result of research and calculation, the probability is, that its tone would not have been so deep and hallowed; at least, we are sure that the mere absence of science was no bar to the piety of the feeling, and the full impress of the morality of the lesson. The purposes for which we go into the philosophic lecture room, and into the house of God, are so distinct, and call forth exercises of mind so different, that they cannot be brought together in a sermon without disturbing or neutralizing each other. Nor is it necessary to make the pulpit the vehicle of philosophy. All that is necessary for the body of the people to know on these subjects can be had more compendiously, and more effectually, by reading cheap and popular publications. Such discourses in the pulpit would tire by the tastelessness of mere generality; or they would displace what ought to be ever most eminent in the ministry, if, to avoid superficial topics, deep discussion and particularity of illustration were resorted to. Nor would this practice accord with the genius of religion. Science creeps, while religion expands the wing and soars. One passing pious

thought, in a devotional moment, on the structure of a pebble, shall produce all the effects supposed by the writer I have alluded to, infinitely more rapidly and efficiently, than if, in scientific adoration, we bowed down before the stocks and stones of geological theories: and the bright sun which on some smiling Sabbath morn lights the steps of the worshipper to the house of his God, or the thunder which may roll at a distance while he is sitting in the solemn assembly before Him 'whose voice it is,' shall shed a sweet and joyous, or a solemn and adoring influence upon the spirit, which would probably be wholly dissipated were the preacher to commence a demonstration to show that the sun must be at least ninety millions of miles distant from the earth; and to account for the thunder, by descanting on the principles of electricity. The praise of profound science is no more true praise to a minister whose vow compels him to 'give himself wholly' to other subjects, than it is praise to him to be scholastically and artificially eloquent. Deep wells are often dry; and there are 'clouds' gay with all the hues of light, which contain 'no water,' and only mock the husbandman while they pass in brilliant career over his parched fields. I would not have you ignorant of the subjects just mentioned, or of any other that can be consecrated to usefulness, which is aided by variety of knowledge. They will afford you many happy facilities of illustrating a truth which rises much higher than themselves; and they often supply the attractive adornings of genuine eloquence: but this, as to you at least, is their principal office. Your administrations must be pregnant with more vital qualities; they are to be 'clouds of blessing.' Genius may mould them into various forms, and taste may illuminate and vary them with 'colours dipped in heaven;' but whatever ray you cast upon the fringes of the cloud, let the body and substance of it be charged with the concentrated vapours of the spring, tremulous to the impulse of every breeze, and impatient to pour the vital shower upon the thirsting earth."

It is needless to add, that the immense congregation which pressed into the chapel in Oldham-street, to hear this address, listened to the whole with deep and earnest attention; and that the impression which it produced in the minds of the young ministers, for whose benefit it was more immediately designed, was most salutary and lasting.

Mr. Watson had now for six years discharged the duties of resident secretary to the Wesleyan Missionary Society; and beyond this period the rules of the connection would not allow him to continue in that office. He himself was also desirous of again resuming the full labours of the Christian ministry, which he regarded as his proper calling. The friends in many places, as might be expected, were anxious that he should be stationed among them; but the principal contest for his appointment was between the Birmingham circuit, and that of Manchester South. After the claims of both these places had been fully heard in the conference, it was determined that he should be sent to Manchester, as the successor of Mr. Bunting. The circuit had only been recently formed; two large chapels had been lately erected; in addition to that in Grosvenor-street, which was built about six or seven years before. The ministry of a man of such piety and commanding talents was deemed exceedingly desirable to give stability to the congregations which had been just formed, and for whose accommodation

so large a pecuniary expenditure was incurred. He was succeeded in his office of secretary by the Rev. Dr. James Townley.

When the conference was over Mr. Watson returned to London, to prepare for his journey. He had been resident in the metropolis eleven years, and during this period had formed many cordial attachments; so that his removal awakened painful feelings in many minds, as well as his own. Self possession was one of his most distinguishing characteristics. He was often affected by the sufferings of others; but in regard to his own trials and sorrows he generally appeared firm and independent, and suppressed all indications of strong emotion, except in the presence of persons with whom he was particularly intimate. The day and hour of his removal was at length fixed; and a few of his friends met him at the inn in Islington, where he and his family were waiting for the coach. When he saw them, his manly and generous spirit was overcome; his philosophy forsook him; the tear glistened in his eye; his lip quivered; his voice faultered; he could only utter the words, "I did not expect this mark of kindness;" and then turned away his face to relieve his feelings by weeping.

He arrived safely in Manchester, and opened his commission on the following Sunday morning, by a discourse in the Grosvenor-street chapel, on Acts x, 29: "Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?"

His colleagues were the Rev. John Hannah, Peter M'Owan, and William M. Bunting; ministers whom he greatly esteemed and loved, and with whom he laboured in happy unity and affection. By the congregations, of course, he was received with every mark of satisfaction and pleasure; and his preaching was made a lasting blessing to many, especially to young persons of respectability and education.

In the earlier years of his ministry Mr. Watson was accustomed to study his sermons with close attention, but he wrote very little by way of preparation for the pulpit. He endeavoured to make himself thoroughly master of the subjects upon which he intended to discourse, and arranged in his own mind the train of thought and argument which he designed to pursue; and his great command of language enabled him to express himself in public with fluency, correctness, and effect. During the six years in which he was resident secretary to the missions, his ministry was generally confined to the Sabbath, and to public occasions; such as the opening of chapels, and the anniversaries of missionary societies, chapels, Sunday schools, and other charities. When he was stationed in Manchester he was placed in new circumstances; and he resolved to adopt a course different from that which he had hitherto pursued. He was persuaded that in ordinary cases, and especially in a large manufacturing town, where the habits of the people are very active, and religious ordinances are abundant, to make a practice of preaching long sermons is not "the most excellent way." It was therefore his determination not to prolong the services of religion to an immoderate length; and with a reference to this object, as well as to some others with which his mind was impressed, he resolved to write his sermons at greater length preparatory to their public delivery. His design in this was not to preach from memory; for to the repetition of sermons he had a strong and a conscientious objec-

tion; but that he might make himself more completely master of every subject upon which he preached; that his sermons might be less discursive; and that he might be able to compress what he had to say within narrower limits than those to which he had been accustomed. Several of the sketches of sermons contained in the third and fourth volumes of his works were written in Manchester, and will be recognized by his friends in that town, as having been delivered in their chapels. While he was in this circuit he wrote a considerable part of the third volume of his "Theological Institutes," which completes that very able and useful work. In addition to much general reading, he also carefully studied some of the Greek writers, particularly Xenophon, and St. Chrysostom, and St. Basil. At the same time his interest in the cause of missions was unabated; and as he stood in the relation of honorary secretary to the Wesleyan Missionary Society, he kept up a regular correspondence with the managers of that institution in London, and occasionally drew up official documents at their request.

Yet in the midst of all his engagements, his attention to his peculiar duties, as the superintendent of a circuit, was most sedulous and exemplary. In all affairs of discipline he consulted his colleagues in the most frank and candid manner. Though some of the country congregations were small, he never employed a substitute when his health allowed him to fulfil his own appointment. The sermons which he preached in Manchester on the week-day evenings, as well as on the Sundays, were thoroughly digested, rich in evangelical sentiment, and generally delivered with such holy fervour and energy, as showed that they had been prepared with much prayer. "Many of these sermons," says Mr. M'Owan, "I heard; and can say that they fully sustained the high character which Mr. Watson had acquired by his services on great public occasions. His variety at home was as remarkable as his greatness abroad."

Like the apostle of the Gentiles, Mr. Watson not only taught the objects of his pastoral charge publicly, but also from house to house; paying special attention to children, and to the youthful branches of religious families; and he generally contrived to spend one or two hours every day in the visitation of the sick; in which he displayed equal fidelity and tenderness. His deepest sympathies were excited in behalf of young people who were the victims of disease. He could not rest till he had acquired their confidence, and understood their spiritual state. When this was done, he was most assiduous in communicating instruction, and in offering up prayers in their behalf, till they were enabled to rejoice in the favour of God, and in hope of future glory.

He attached great importance to the meetings of the different committees appointed to manage the affairs of Sunday schools, and missionary and tract societies; and that he and his brethren might have an opportunity of attending them, he preserved one night in the week free from preaching engagements. The religious services of the several chapels he regarded as incomplete without an evening prayer meeting once a week; and when his numerous and pressing engagements would permit, he esteemed it a privilege to attend the meeting which was held in the chapel nearest to his residence. To every thing like rant in the worship of God he was strenuously and from principle

opposed; yet he often greatly rejoiced at such meetings to hear the language of agonizing and Scriptural supplication flow from the lips and hearts of poor and unlearned men, of the depth of whose piety he had satisfactory proof.

As a spiritual watchman Mr. Watson felt it to be his duty to warn his hearers, and especially the people who were under his pastoral care, of the evils to which he saw them liable; and during the first year of his residence in Manchester, his fidelity in this respect received a striking demonstration. Few men were better judges of sacred music than himself, or had a higher relish for the sublime strains of Handel's genius. With a feeling deep as that of Milton, he could say,—

> "But let my due feet never fail,
> To walk the studious cloister's pale,
> And love the high embowed roof,
> With antique pillars massy proof,
> And storied windows richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light.
> There let the pealing organ blow,
> To the full-voiced choir below,
> In service high, and anthems clear,
> As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
> Dissolve me into ecstasies,
> And bring all heaven before mine eyes."

But he felt, also, that this noble science is particularly liable to abuse; and that it is worse than profane for ungodly men to sing the hallowed language of inspiration merely as matter of amusement.—It is a direct and presumptuous mockery of God himself, for men of this character to express the sorrows of penitence and the joys of salvation, the glorious announcements of prophecy, and the humiliation and triumphs of Messiah; and especially as an introduction to dance and revelry. A splendid musical festival and fancy ball were advertised to be held in Manchester; and some members of the Methodist society, and others who attended the Methodist ministry, deceived by the word "sacred," were known to have purchased tickets of admission. Mr. Watson preached a sermon with a reference to this subject, in which he proved that the whole affair was a laboured attempt to reconcile Christ and Belial, and to ensnare the unwary, by disguising the pleasures of sin under the garb of religion. After describing the spirit and habits of many professional singers and performers, in terms unhappily true, but the reverse of complimentary, he exclaimed, with great emphasis, "And, forsooth, these men are pledged to mimic the sacrificial wailings of my blessed Lord; and to sound on catgut the groans which redeemed the world!"

The effects of this sermon were most satisfactory. Not more than one or two members of the Methodist society in the circuit to which Mr. Watson belonged attended the festival. They chose rather to forfeit the money which they had inadvertently paid, than sacrifice their religious consistency.

His success in dissuading his hearers from countenancing this feat of fashionable levity presents a strong and pleasing proof of the deference which was paid to his judgment on questions of Christian morality: a natural result of that confidence which they had in him

as a man of superior understanding, and of great piety and uprightness. The whole of his conduct, both as a man and a minister of Christ, was calculated to produce and strengthen that impression.—An intelligent friend, (John Marsden, Esq.,) who sat under his ministry in Manchester, and enjoyed unrestrained intimacy with him, thus speaks of him at this period:—"I had frequent opportunities of viewing him in various situations previous to his appointment to our circuit. I had heard him preach upon particular occasions, and speak at missionary meetings; and I admired him as a man of superior intellect and talent; but still more did I admire him, when I sat under his regular ministry. I then found him to be a plain, practical preacher of the Gospel, elucidating its truths in a manner calculated to enlighten the understanding, and affect the heart. He possessed an energy which I know not how to describe. It was the energy of mind; not evidenced by loud speaking, or violent action. On some occasions particularly, there was a dignity in his manner which was impressive and commanding beyond description. He sometimes gave utterance to sentiment and language beyond what might ever be expected from human nature. But, in my estimation, it was not even in the pulpit that he shone with the greatest lustre. In the more private means of grace which we as a body enjoy, he appeared, not only as the gifted minister, but as the devout Christian. I wish I had the ability to describe him in the meetings of the classes and the bands. He related his Christian experience with a simplicity and humility which I never saw excelled; and he approached the footstool of the Almighty, when pouring out his soul in prayer, with a fervency and devotion which, while it evidenced his own self abasement, manifested, most powerfully, the exalted views which he entertained of the Divine Majesty and holiness, and the sufficiency and perfection of the Redeemer's atonement."

It might be expected, considering Mr. Watson's talents and reputation, that applications would often be made to him, from circuits both near and remote, to preach occasional sermons; but he could only take a very limited portion of this kind of service. The general delicacy of his health rendered him ill able to endure the fatigue of long journeys; and the nature of his complaint made travelling particularly inconvenient. He had also a deep conviction of the responsibility which rested upon him as a Christian pastor, to whom the care of a large flock was committed. No man was more willing to oblige and serve his brethren, in this and in every other way; but he felt that he ought not to leave his own people and congregations, except in cases of necessity, which would justify him in his own conscience. He was therefore generally to be found at the post of duty in his own circuit; and his great regularity secured for him the confidence of the congregations, as well as their esteem and love.

CHAPTER XXI.

Missionary Report for 1827—Anniversary of the Missionary Society in 1828—Benefit of the Scriptures—Mr. Watson publishes the fifth Part of his Theological Institutes—Remarks on Calvinism—Anecdote of the Rev. Rowland Hill—The Conference of 1828—Attempts to subvert the Methodist Discipline—Mr. Watson publishes his "Affectionate Address"—Pamphlets of the Rev. Daniel Isaac—Two Replies to Mr. Watson's Address—Character of those Publications—Letter on Mr. Watson's early History—Letter on his future Appointment—Report of the Missionary Society for 1828—Letter to Mr. James Nichols—Mr. Watson publishes the last Part of his Theological Institutes, and presents that Work to the Connection—The Conference of 1829—Tribute to the Memory of Thomas Thompson, Esq.—Mr. Watson's Removal to London—Address at the Ordination of Missionaries—Letter to the Rev. John Hannah—Report of the Missionary Society for the year 1829—Persecution in Jamaica.

EARLY in the year 1828 the annual report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society was published. It was written by Mr. Watson, before he left London; and a copious outline of it was read at the anniversary of the society in the preceding spring. It states that sixteen missionaries, most of whom were married, had been sent out by the committee in the course of the year. The total number of mission stations, in different parts of the world, was one hundred and thirty-eight; and the number of missionaries employed by the society, one hundred and eighty-eight. The number of members of religious society, under the care of the missionaries, was thirty-four thousand eight hundred and ninety-two; being an increase, during the year, of two thousand and thirty-four. Of the aggregate number of members, twenty-seven thousand six hundred and six were negroes and people of colour in the West India colonies. The returns of the number of children in the mission schools were incomplete; but upward of sixteen thousand were actually reported as under religious tuition. The income of the society was £43,235. 7*s*. 9*d*. The report thus concludes:—

"These exercises of charity to man, and expressions of love to Christ, are the efforts of the living; but, by one subject of solemn recollection, we are reminded that they are the works of a short and uncertain day. The loss of our late general treasurer, Joseph Butterworth, Esq., which took place during the preceding year, cannot but be urged upon our thoughts, on presenting another annual report to our subscribers and friends; and the committee feel that they but express the sentiment of the whole society, while they record their grateful testimony to the excellent character and public usefulness of their departed and venerated friend. To the cause of missions, and to the concerns of this institution, he especially devoted himself. His counsel, his influence, and his exertions, were all consecrated to its service: it had his cares; it was identified with his joys and hopes; and he surrendered, without regret, the engagements of public life, in the anticipation of having a larger portion of time to devote to its extension and success. That purpose He who determines the ways of men did not permit him to live to execute; but by that affecting expression of his interest in objects connected with the salvation of men, he at once showed the deep and solemn regard he maintained for things of eternal moment, and left to us an edifying instance of perseverance in these

benevolent cares to the end of life. The committee, who laboured with him in the regular management of these missions, can never forget the warmth of his zeal, and the prudence of his counsels. Knowing that the work was of God, and that it had his glory and the accomplishment of his designs for its objects, and deeply affected with the vice and wretchedness of man in every part of the world, he was the first to lead to new and hopeful enterprises of missionary zeal, and the last to doubt whether the effort would be crowned by the blessing of God, or be supported by the liberality of his people. The loss of such a man while life seemed still to promise years of usefulness, is a subject of sincere regret; but his example lives; his example of faith in God; of love to the family of Christ, however distinguished by names and forms; and of charitable exertion in the holy cause of extending the kingdom of Christ, and of filling the world with its truth, and saving influence. Happy are the living who thus connect themselves with interests which know no limit but eternity; and happy are the dead, the fruit of whose prayers, and liberality, and efforts, is following them to that pure world, where the extended plans of heaven in the redemption of our race are clearly known, where they are adoringly contemplated, and in which they all terminate.

"In conclusion, the committee again commend this great and growing work to the affectionate cares and support of the friends of Christ. The exertions of those ministers who have pleaded the cause of the society on the various deputations to different parts of the country specially demand acknowledgment; as well as the active management of the different branch and auxiliary societies by their respective officers, and the diligence of the collectors, on whose generous devotion of time and labour so much depends. They are happy to have marked no serious indications of weariness in this important branch of well doing, in any part of the kingdom, although some places, doubtless, still fall below their capabilities in their contributions. It is, however, a subject of the highest satisfaction to observe, that what once was thought to be an evanescent feeling, is settled into deep and permanent principle; thus affording the pledge, that no enterprise which has been begun shall fail for want of support, and that no door of access to new labours shall long stand open, without calling forth the means necessary to send ministers to enter into it. This principle, resting as it does on duty, on promise, on hope, must be strengthened by every reflection, and by every serious reference to the word of God, and to the state of the world. Never did the powers of light and darkness present themselves in a contest so wide spread and so determined. It is no longer to a sleeping world we call; but to a world awake for good or for evil. The aggressions made upon the territories of the common enemy have roused his vigilance; the torches of truth have been carried into the recesses of pagan, popish, and Mohammedan darkness; and the world is in a state of hope and fear. It is in this condition of things that the Church is becoming more eminently militant, and is taking up her more advanced posts, in which more is to be done, and perhaps more is to be suffered. But the noblest ambition is roused,—the ambition of blessing men; of turning the world's darkness into light, and its tumults into peace. The prospect is sublime; because the effects connect themselves so little with visible agency, and so much with God. A few

societies, composed, for the most part, of persons little and unknown;—contributions flowing in from ten thousand channels, but with a stream small and noiseless, having their hidden sources, for the most part, among the pious poor;—men, sent forth simply to preach Christ, to establish schools, to translate the Scriptures, to converse with meekness, and to persuade by example; scatterred over vast continents and distant islands; few, among the many myriads of aliens from God and truth;—here is no array of power, no consultations of worldly policy, no march of crusading armies; yet the slumber of ages is disturbed, the chain of the captive breaks, the clouds of error dissipate, the light of universal day dawns, and the demons of idolatry and superstition retire before it, or brandish a feeble, though malignant, defiance. Invisible as the secret and far-working power is, such a power is there, and it is the power of God. Invisible is that influence, which, spreading over the expanse of the waters of the ocean, rolls them in their bed, and heaves them in submissive tides upon their shores; yet who recognizes not an unseen agency, and who bows not before its majesty? So the Spirit of God has gone forth over the hearts of men; and the first gentle heavings of feeling and opinion are but prelusive of that mighty flowing in of nations to the Church of God, predicted by the prophet, at the sight of which she shall 'fear and be enlarged,' and with prostrate awe acknowledge that this is the great work of God. If God then be for us, who shall be against us? In his name we have gone forth, and have not returned empty; in his name let us go forth again to the prayers and the labours of another year, and doubt not, but steadfastly believe, that He who has never deceived our trust, will fulfil that word unto all his servants in which he has caused them to hope. To him be glory for ever. Amen!"

Mr. Watson accepted the pressing invitation of the committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society to attend the anniversary of that institution in the spring of 1828; and delivered an admirable sermon in its behalf, at the chapel in Great Queen-street, on the morning of Friday, May 2d. His text was Eccles. xi, 1–6; and the sermon will be found in the second volume of his works. It was delivered with an energy and a glow of pious and benevolent feeling which it would be difficult to describe. The attendance was very large; and the wasted form of the preacher, and his pallid countenance, indicative of intense suffering, created a deep sympathy in the assembly. He preached on the morning of the following Sunday, at the City-Road chapel, on Rom. iii, 1, 2: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." The principal subject of this discourse was, the benefit arising from the possession of the Holy Scriptures, as an acknowledged revelation from God; and one of the remarks upon which he dwelt at some length was, that these oracles make other oracles vocal. While men remain ignorant of God, every object in nature is full of mystery, and the dispensations of Providence are inexplicable. Whether the universe was formed by chance, or has existed from eternity, or how it came into existence and was arranged, the greatest men have not been able to determine; and they have been equally at a loss to discover, whether the events of life are the result of chance, or of a blind and inexorable fate. Even the dictates of

conscience are powerless and unintelligible. But when the sacred oracles make the Almighty known, as the Creator of all things, the God of providence, the righteous Governor of the world, and the Saviour of men, his voice is heard on every side, and in every object and event. Created nature declares his power, and wisdom, and goodness; every personal and domestic comfort speaks of his bounty and love; the various calamities by which men are visited indicate the sinfulness of sin, and God's displeasure on account of it; and every succeeding day of human life declares the Divine patience and long suffering. The Rev. Barnabas Shaw, one of the intrepid missionaries from Southern Africa, heard this sermon; and in his speech at the public meeting on the following morning, adverted to it with lively interest, and supplied a beautiful illustration of the doctrine which it contained. Speaking of the savage tribes, among whom he had so successfully laboured, and having referred to Mr. Watson's sermon, he said, "From the representations of some travellers, one might have supposed that the heathen were a kind of angels, and the country they inhabited a sort of paradise; but we know they are not happy, they are not moral, they are not honest; but are living in darkness, without God and without hope in the world. The Gospel has given them correct ideas of God and of his works, which they had not before. They had never heard of God. When they heard of that great Being who created all things, and had once caught the idea, they began to think and speak of him. One of them said, after hearing the Gospel, 'When I stand by the sea shore, and see the tremendous waves rising, and hear them dashing on the rocks; and when I come on the following day, and see that all is still and calm, and the sun is shining upon the ocean; then I think how great must He be who made that vast and mighty water. And when I see the mountains in the desert, rising one above another, I think how great must be that God who made them; and I seem to hear a voice, saying, Go, and pray to him; go, and call upon him who made the sea, and the mountains, and the fountains of water.' Thus, after they have heard the truth, day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work."

Mr. Watson was in such a state of infirm health on the day of the public meeting as to be unable to take an active part in its proceedings; but he participated in the feelings of holy joy which were generally cherished on that interesting occasion.

Early in this month he published the fifth part of his "Theological Institutes," completing his view of the doctrines of Christianity. He had already vindicated the Scripture doctrine of redemption by the death of Christ, and had proceeded to speak of its benefits; and he here inquires whether or not those benefits are attainable by all men. This inquiry leads to a discussion of the whole Calvinistic controversy; in which he takes the Arminian side. This controversy, in fact, lies within a very small compass, though it has often been drawn out to great length. The whole is resolvable into this one question,—"Are the decrees of God, according to which the eternal states of men will be determined, absolute or conditional?" Calvin taught that the endless destiny of every man was unalterably fixed by God from eternity, by his own sovereign will, irrespective of the personal conduct of his

creatures.* Arminius contended, on the other hand, that God's predestination of men is founded upon his foreknowledge; and that individuals are saved as believers in Jesus Christ, and condemned as obstinate and incorrigible unbelievers; the means of faith having been supplied by the mercy of God, in regard to Christ's atonement and intercession. In this question, it will be perceived, are comprehended many others; such as the nature of God's election; the extent of human redemption; the freedom of the human will; and the perseverance in the ways of God of those who have once been the subjects of renewing grace.

Mr. Watson had many serious objections to the tenets of Calvinism, when considered in detail; and he was conscientiously opposed to the system, as a whole. He used to observe that its essential principles are not deduced from the word of God, interpreted according to its general and popular import, but from metaphysical speculations concerning the Divine nature. Men have contended for the doctrine of absolute predestination, because they could not reconcile the certain foreknowledge of God with contingent events; and have limited the atonement of Christ, because they thought it dishonourable to the wisdom of God that any of his redeemed creatures should perish. Several of the most popular and esteemed defences of the Calvinistic system are almost exclusively metaphysical. Such, especially, are those of President Edwards and Dr. Williams, men of unquestioned piety and ability, who nevertheless, in the recommendation and establishment of their peculiar views, often lose sight altogether of the inspired Scriptures, and bewilder themselves and their readers in the subtleties of an abstract philosophy. To all such attempts to explain and modify "the Gospel of our salvation," Mr. Watson was strenuously opposed. He thought that Christians are bound implicitly to receive "the testimony of God." To limit the Divine mercy in the redemption of mankind, upon philosophic grounds, and in the teeth of the most express declarations of Scripture, he regarded as presumptuous, and a conduct to be earnestly deprecated.

The peculiarities of the Calvinistic theory, he also thought, impose very serious restraints upon Christian ministers in the discharge of their official duties, and often involve them in painful perplexities.—Suppose a minister of the Gospel, in the argumentative part of his discourse, to establish, to his own perfect satisfaction, and the full conviction of his hearers, the doctrine of absolute predestination and limited atonement; what is the practical conclusion to be deduced from these premises? Not, certainly, that the way of salvation is opened to

* The following is Calvin's own statement of the subject:—"God 'hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.' You see how he (the apostle) attributes *both* to the *mere will* of God. If, therefore, we can assign no reason why he grants mercy to his people, but because such is his pleasure; neither shall we find any other cause but *his will* for the reprobation of others. For when God is said to harden or show mercy to whom he pleases, men are taught by this declaration to seek *no cause beside his will*." (*Calvin's Institutes*, translated by Allen, book iii, chap. 22.) "Many, indeed, as if they wished to avert odium from God, admit election in such a way as to deny that any one is reprobated. But this is puerile and absurd; because election itself could not exist, without being opposed to reprobation: whom God *passes by, he therefore reprobates;* and *from no other cause* than his determination to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines for his children." (*Ibid.* chap. 23.)

all present, by the infinite mercy of God; and that pardon and holiness, as a preparation for heaven, are immediately attainable by every one through the sacrifice of Christ. In exact proportion as the principle of absolute predestination takes hold upon the unregenerate mind, exhortations to immediate repentance, and to a believing application to the blood of atonement, are necessarily neutralized. And in the case of individual inquirers after the way of life, whether they be in health, or on the bed of sickness and death, the uncertainty as to whether the persons in question be actually redeemed, and whether they are predestinated to life or death, must greatly restrain those free and encouraging offers of salvation which would otherwise be poured forth by Christian zeal and love.

The moral tendency of the tenets of strict Calvinism, he also thought, was far from salutary. That they are so often rendered innoxious by an admixture of the pure and sanctifying principles of evangelical truth, was to him matter of grateful acknowledgment; but when men cherish a full persuasion that they are irreversibly appointed either to heaven or hell, by an irrespective decree, as Calvin distinctly teaches, the result, in many instances, will be a vain and unhallowed presumption, maintained under spiritual decays and practical ungodliness; and in other cases, a withering despair. On this subject Mr. Watson once received a remarkable concession from a man who, in the earlier years of his life, had been greatly distinguished by his ardour in defence of those principles, and in opposition to the tenets of Mr. Wesley. Not long after he had become resident in London, he met a large number of dissenting ministers, on some public occasion, the nature of which is not distinctly recollected. The venerable Rowland Hill, supposing him to belong to the Independent denomination, said to him, "Whatever shall we do, sir, to prevent the spread of Antinomianism, which is making such dreadful havoc of many of our country Churches? Don't you think, sir, that there really is something in our Calvinistic doctrines which is calculated to produce this terrible evil?" Mr. Watson, who was taken by surprise, and felt himself placed in a somewhat peculiar situation, assented to Mr. Hill's suggestion; and the aged apostle of Calvinian theology added, in his own emphatic manner, "I spent my younger days in fighting the Arminian devil; but I will spend the rest of my life in fighting the devil of Antinomianism." This pledge that excellent man fully redeemed. For several years no minister of his age was more strenuous in the inculcation of purity of heart, and of universal holiness, than he; and though it is not pretended that he renounced the peculiarities of his creed, they were less prominent in his ministrations than they had formerly been; while his zeal for practical religion and righteousness, it was often said, led him occasionally even to surpass the doctrine of Christian perfection as taught by his former opponents, Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher.

In the discussion of the Calvinistic controversy Mr. Watson steadily adheres to the principle by which he had been guided through the whole of his work,—the paramount authority of Holy Scripture on all doctrinal questions. Some Arminian writers, he thought, in imitation of their Calvinian antagonists, had conceded too much to metaphysics in this controversy; and were to be blamed for not satisfying themselves with a simple and direct appeal to the law and the prophets.

The subject of predestination and its concomitants are therefore by him brought to the test of the sacred writings, honestly and conscientiously interpreted. He was aware of the difficulties connected with many of these topics, difficulties which may perhaps exceed the ability of even angelic minds to solve; and he was aware, too, that the system which he opposed had been held, with various modifications, by several of the greatest ornaments of Protestant Christendom,—men of equal learning, piety, and zeal; he therefore felt that the discussion was not to be conducted with levity and sarcasm, but with charity and seriousness, and with a respectful deference to the judgment and opinions of the men from whom he conceived himself bound to dissent. His arguments are founded upon Scripture; his reasonings are strong and convincing; and his spirit is uniformly benevolent and kind. No man was more sensible than he, that all is not error which bears the name of Calvinism; and that the Genevan reformer and the great body of his followers have strenuously advocated the vital truths of the Christian revelation. He therefore carefully distinguishes between what he conceives to be merely the opinions and "commandments of men," and principles of a far higher origin.

This portion of the Theological Institutes is distinguished by great originality of thought and manner. The writer doubtless derived considerable advantage from the writings of Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher, and those of John Goodwin, and Doctors Pierce and Womack; but through the entire discussion he thinks for himself, and is an imitator of no preceding advocate of general redemption, especially in his answers to the theories of some modern writers, who have endeavoured to give to some parts of the Calvinistic system an aspect less revolting than that in which it had been presented by their fathers. When he was writing this part of his work a friend put into his hands the tracts of Dr. Thomas Pierce; in the perusal of which he was deeply interested, especially the "Correct Copy of some Notes concerning God's Decrees." He had never previously seen this incomparable tract, which greatly strengthened the conviction which he had long entertained, that, however the Almighty may, by an act of mere sovereignty, elect nations and bodies of people to the enjoyment of Church privileges on earth, his decrees according to which their eternal states will be appointed are respective of character. Pierce was an Episcopal divine of great learning, who flourished during the Commonwealth, and the reign of Charles the Second. He assisted Bishop Walton in the publication of his Polyglott Bible; and with his friend Dr. Lawrence Womack, most ably defended those views of Divine truth which Melancthon promulgated in the latter years of his life, and which Arminius afterward maintained. On some subjects he was the successful antagonist of Baxter; and in his vindication of Grotius, especially, against Baxter's harsh censures, he compelled that great controversialist to quail before him.

Mr. Watson concludes his discussion of the controversy concerning "the five points" in the following manner, which is a just specimen of the whole:—"It is by such reasonings, made plausible to many minds by an affectation of metaphysical depth and subtilty, or by pretensions of magnifying the sovereignty and grace of God, (often, we doubt not, very sincere,) that the theory of election and reprobation, as

held by the followers of Calvin, with some shades of difference, but in all substantially the same, has had currency given to it in the Church of Christ in these latter ages. How unsound and how contrary to the Scriptures they are, may appear from that brief refutation of them just given; but I repeat, what was said above, that we are never to forget that this system has interwoven with it many of the most vital points of Christianity. It is this circumstance which has kept it in existence; for otherwise it had never, probably, held itself up against the opposing evidence of so many plain scriptures, and that sense of the benevolence and equity of God which his own revelations, as well as natural reason, have riveted in the convictions of mankind. In one respect the Calvinistic and Socinian schemes have tacitly confessed the evidence of the word of God to be against them. The latter has shrunk from the letter and common-sense interpretation of Scripture within the clouds raised by licentious criticism; the other has chosen rather to find refuge in the mists of metaphysical theories. Nothing is, however, here meant by this juxta position of theories so contrary to each other, but that both thus confess that the *prima facie* evidence of the word of God is not in their favour. If we intended more by thus naming on the same page systems so opposite, one of which, with all its faults, contains all that truth by which men may be saved, while the other excludes it, we 'should offend against the generation of God's children.'"

Having, according to his apprehension, settled the question of the extent of redemption, Mr. Watson resumes the consideration of its benefits. Among these are, entire sanctification, the right to pray, victory over death, the reception of the spirit into paradise, and the resurrection of the body. On the subject of entire sanctification, his views accord with those of Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher. He contends that it is the common privilege of believers to be saved from all sin during the present life; and to be sanctified to God in body, soul, and spirit, till they enter upon the heavenly state. The notion, that the identity of the human body consists in some minute germ, which is to be the element of the body that shall be raised, he strenuously and successfully opposes, as having no foundation in Scripture, and a mere suggestion of skeptical philosophy, designed to relieve the imaginary difficulty of raising the dead, in the plain and obvious sense of that expression. God has pledged his veracity for the accomplishment of this work; his omnipotence is equal to the task; and beyond this Mr. Watson had no inquiries to make. The resurrection of the dead must, in the nature of things, be strictly miraculous; and philosophical speculations on such a subject savour far more of presumption than godly edifying.

The conference of 1828 was held in London. It commenced on the 30th of July, and was a season of painful anxiety, on account of the dissensions which had taken place during the preceding year in the Leeds society. Some individuals, who had long been hostile to the Methodist discipline, and who had not the honour peacefully to retire from the connection, had unhappily been allowed to acquire considerable influence in the large societies of that town and neighbourhood; and seemed to be waiting for an opportunity to carry their principles into practical effect. That opportunity at length arrived. The per-

mission given by the conference to the trustees of a large new chapel in Leeds to erect an organ there, in opposition to the wishes of certain parties,—many of whom belonged to other chapels, and therefore had no right either in law or equity to interfere,—was made the occasion of raising the standard of opposition to all rule and authority. Discipline was at an end; and a special district meeting was called to assist in the restoration of order. The ringleaders were expelled; but they succeeded, in the midst of great excitement, by inflammatory publications, and other means, in drawing away a large number of people from the Wesleyan body, and in opening rival places of worship. This secession produced considerable uneasiness in various parts of the connection; the conference devoted several days to a careful investigation of the whole case; and the result was, that the thanks of that body were almost unanimously given to the preachers of the Leeds circuit, to the members of the special district meeting, and to the official persons in the Leeds society, for the part which they had severally acted in preserving the rules and usages of the connection on that very painful occasion. Mr. Watson took a share in the debate, and fully concurred in these resolutions. The conference directed the preachers who were returned to Leeds, to receive again into the society those private individuals who had been led astray, and were inclined to retrace their steps; and at the same time affectionately invited such persons to return to their former friends, among whom they had first drawn the breath of spiritual life, and from whom they had, in an evil hour, been separated.

At that time there were persons belonging to the Methodist societies in London who were, like the separatists of Leeds, desirous of introducing serious innovations in the discipline of the connection; and as the attention which the Leeds case had excited rendered the opportunity favourable for putting forth their views, they assumed the character of agitators. They had already published a pamphlet under the title of an "Address to the Conference," which they circulated industriously; the mischievous character and design of which were too obvious, and called forth the animadversions of that body in the printed minutes. Not satisfied with this, they next drew up certain resolutions, to which several good men were induced, by dishonest means, to affix their names, without being duly aware of the design of the framers of that document. When the matter was understood, some of them complained bitterly of the manner in which their signatures had been obtained. In the meanwhile, every means was employed to give circulation both to the resolutions and the address.

The leading principle of both these publications was, that each separate society among the Methodists has its own jurisdiction, from which there is no appeal; so that, whatever may be the decision of a leaders' meeting, or of a meeting of local preachers, it shall in no case be interfered with, whatever may be the nature of that decision, and however respectable may be the parties who feel themselves aggrieved. Neither a district meeting, nor the conference, shall control any of the determinations of those local authorities. This, it will be perceived, is the principle of independency, upon which a large proportion of the dissenting Churches are formed; but then they carry

the principle through all their ecclesiastical arrangements, and never dream of adapting it to a connection like that of the Methodists. The Independent Churches claim the right, in their Church capacity, of adopting what system of theology to them appears the most correct, from the lowest grade of Socinianism, to the most rigid principles of supralapsarian Calvinism; to determine the conditions upon which members shall be received into their communion, and admitted to the Lord's table; whether infants or adults shall be baptized; and whether this ordinance shall be administered by sprinkling or immersion; with the hymns they shall sing, and the form of worship they shall practise. Every Independent Church also claims the right of appointing its own minister; and while he retains his relation to them, of course it is expected that he shall agree with them in all their peculiarities of sentiment and worship, let them be what they may. In the Churches thus constituted, when the minority are dissatisfied, either with the doctrine taught, or the order maintained, or the moral conduct of their brethren, they have no means of redress, except that of retiring, and providing for themselves elsewhere the means of Christian edification. It is not intended by these remarks to cast any reflections upon the Christians who conscientiously prefer this form of ecclesiastical order; but merely to show the principles upon which their Churches are constituted, and the manner of their operation.

That the decisions of the leaders' meetings and of local preachers' meetings should never be controlled in ordinary cases, and when they are in accordance with the doctrines, rules, and usages of the body, is freely conceded; and no man was a more strenuous advocate of the just rights of these local authorities than Mr. Watson; but to make them absolutely independent, and yet consider them as parts of a connection, like that of the Methodists, he saw to be palpably absurd.—To invest them with that character would lead to endless strife and contention; and ultimately subvert the entire system of Wesleyan Methodism. Whatever abstract rights the different functionaries and private members of the Methodist societies possessed, they have freely conceded, for the sake of the superior advantages resulting from an itinerant ministry, and their union with an extended religious connection. Had the Methodist societies been so many independent bodies, they would have been comparatively powerless in the world; and neither their missionary operations, nor their efforts for the promotion of religion at home, would have borne the slightest comparison with their present extent and efficiency. Of this Mr. Wesley was fully aware; and he therefore denominated the people under his care, as they really were, "The *United* Societies;" that is, the religious societies, so united as to constitute one body, having one common form of discipline, doctrine, and worship; and an itinerant ministry, appointed first by himself, and afterward by the annual conference.—According to the principle now attempted to be introduced, should a leaders' meeting, under whatever circumstances, tolerate the violation of the Methodist rules, by conniving at particular acts of immorality, —a very possible case, where the number of leaders is small, and the men are under the control of some influential individual,—the sound part of the society have no means of relief, however deeply they may feel themselves injured. Should a majority of local preachers, in any

circuit, however inconsiderable their number, unhappily adopt heretical opinions, even to a denial of the Godhead and atonement of Christ, the minority among their brethren, and the congregations to whom they minister, can obtain no redress; but must submit to attend the ministry of men who even deny the Lord that bought them. In vain might they appeal to a district meeting, or to the conference, and declare that they joined the Methodist body with a distinct understanding that they should enjoy a *Wesleyan* ministry; the answer to all their applications, according to the doctrine now attempted to be established, would be, "The local authority is absolute and independent; and there lies no appeal from its decisions." The aggrieved parties, upon this plan, have no means of satisfying their consciences, but that of withdrawing from a corrupt community, and from chapels which perhaps they have themselves built. Nor could the trustees of the chapels exclude from their pulpits these teachers of destructive heresy but by an appeal to law. According to the new modification of Methodism, recommended by the address and resolutions, the travelling preachers, too, might find in some of the circuits every form of doctrine, and every mode of worship; in which they would be required to acquiesce. Whatever those irresponsible bodies, leaders and local preachers, chose to establish, in any particular place, either in the shape of doctrine, discipline, or morals, every superintendent must not only tolerate, but sanction. A dissenting minister who accepts the call of an Independent Church is acquainted with its tenets and order, and has an opportunity of judging whether or not they accord with his views of Scripture; but the hapless Methodist itinerant must, in the case contemplated, "become all things to all men," in a sense which neither his Bible, his conscience, nor even common honesty would warrant.

The cases of corrupt doctrine and conduct here supposed are not imaginary. Serious errors, both in theology and practice, have risen up in different parts of the connection, and at different periods of its history. The discipline of the body has wisely provided against them; and they have in every instance been effectually arrested in their progress; but the means of their extinction, when a majority of men could in any place be found to defend them, the agitators in question laboured to remove; and were clamorous for the attainment of this object. Had they avowed a conscientious preference for the Independent mode of Church government, quietly withdrawn from the connection, and sought to satisfy their own minds by connecting themselves with Churches formed upon their own model, their motives and integrity would have entitled them to respect; but they laboured to disturb the peace of the body by attempting to subvert those parts of its constitution which, under some circumstances, are even essential to its existence.

Mr. Watson, with his characteristic manliness, came forward in this emergency, and prepared a seasonable antidote to a publication which was bold in assertion, and had already produced an injurious impression upon the minds of many people, who had been more attentive to their spiritual interests than to the principles of ecclesiastical order, and the history of the connection to which they belonged. The title of his publication was, "An Affectionate Address to those Trustees,

Stewards, Local Preachers, and Leaders, of the London South Circuit, whose Names are affixed to certain Resolutions, bearing date Sept. 23d, 1828."

It was written in a spirit of great kindness; for the author knew that several of the persons whom he addressed were not prepared to carry into practical effect the principles to which they had been induced to give the sanction of their names. An honest indignation at the men who had imposed upon their brethren, it was difficult to repress.

At this time the Methodist connection at large was inclined to pay great deference to Mr. Watson's opinions. For several years he had given such substantial proofs of enlarged and comprehensive views, of active zeal and piety, of sobriety and moderation, and of attachment to the body of which he was an ornament, that a more than ordinary respect was shown for his judgment. His pamphlet was therefore generally read and with the most satisfactory effect. It was in such demand that some thousands of copies were sold in a few weeks, and it greatly served to restore confidence and tranquillity to the connection. The spirit of the writer was universally admired; his exposition of the principles of the Wesleyan discipline carried conviction to most minds; and the circumstance, that the writer had once belonged to another community, in which he had seen the practical effect of divisions among religious people, gave an authority and impressiveness to his remarks and warnings which they otherwise would not have possessed. He had no quarrel with those Christians who prefer the Independent mode of Church government; they have an unquestionable right to follow their own convictions: but to identify Independency with Wesleyan Methodism, comprehending an itinerant ministry, and a uniform system of discipline, he saw to be worse than absurd; and the plea, that such was in fact the constitution of the connection, he found it difficult to reconcile with an honest intention. The power possessed by Mr. Wesley had been used not to grieve and oppress the people under his care; but to preserve inviolate the doctrine and order of the body, and to afford protection to those who might feel themselves injured. Since Mr. Wesley's death, the conference has stood in the same paternal relation to the connection; and up to the period in question, the right of appeal to that assembly, by all who conceived that they had just ground of complaint, does not appear ever to have been denied.

While Mr. Watson defended the Methodist discipline, the Rev. Daniel Isaac, who was then stationed in Leeds, exposed the designs of the dissentients there, by comparing their practices with their professions, and both with the Holy Scriptures; and the consequence was, that the plan of effecting an extensive separation from the Methodist body entirely failed. In Leeds and the vicinity a considerable proportion of the pious people, who had been misled, returned to their former associates; and the society soon began to feel the beneficial effect of the removal from its pale of the disaffected men who, by their agitations, had for years retarded its prosperity. It was now at unity with itself; and the happy effect was soon apparent. The deficiency of its numbers, occasioned by the separation, was soon supplied, by the accession of new converts, and the return of those who had been drawn from the fold; and for some years the cause has there been in a more healthy and efficient state than its friends had ever previously witnessed.

The society and congregations far surpass those of any former period; and the piety, order, and spirituality of those who are in Church fellowship have kept pace with their increasing numbers. It must afford a high gratification to the excellent men whose painful duty it was to maintain the Wesleyan discipline in Leeds, against so much determined and clamorous opposition, that results so beneficial have ensued from the measures which they adopted; and particularly to the Rev. Edmund Grindrod, the superintendent of the circuit in which the standard of revolt was raised. The sad fact, however, is, that several persons who were under religious impressions at the time of the secession, yielding to the soul-destroying influence of clamour and party spirit, lost their gracious convictions, and abandoned altogether the profession of religion. The blood of these souls must be accounted for, in the day of the Lord, by the men who turned them out of the way of righteousness. The great lesson to be learned from the whole case is, that men of unsound principles, and of factious habits and character, ought never to be invested with the leading influence in the Church of God. Those persons cannot be guiltless who give to mischievous men the means and opportunity of working evil in Christian societies. On this occasion Mr. Watson acted the part of a peace maker, not by flattering bad men, for of this he was incapable; not by concealing the truth, for this he felt to be contrary to the simplicity of the Christian character; not by conceding any of the rights which are inherent in the pastoral office, and which are invested in it by the Head of the Church for the benefit of his people, for such a conduct would be fatal to the interests of piety; but by a distinct avowal and defence of the Methodist discipline, and a kind expostulation with the men who, while they professed to walk by it, and admire it, were, in fact, seeking its subversion. He rendered a valuable service to the connection, and the connection highly appreciated his labours. His pamphlet bears the date of Dec. 29th, 1828.

Mr. Watson was returned to Manchester a second year, at the earnest request of the friends in that circuit; but he had personal reasons for wishing to be removed from this station at the end of that period. Of this he gave notice to the stewards at the approach of Christmas, that they might have the means of providing a successor in due time. To them, and to the people in general throughout the circuit, this information was exeedingly painful; and the applications to him, if possible, to alter his purpose were numerous, affectionate, and pressing. As soon as his intention to remove was known, the friends in various circuits were anxious to secure his services, and solicited him to become one of their ministers at the ensuing conference. The earliest letters of invitation which he appears to have received were addressed to him from the Birmingham circuit, and that of the City-Road, London. To these circumstances he alludes in a letter which was addressed to the writer of this narrative, under the date of December 1st, 1828. "I have given notice," says he, "to our people, that I must leave at the ensuing conference, and have had a painful commotion. The very kind and marked expression of their sentiments, however, must not alter my purpose, though it greatly affects me. But the last place I think of is London; not for want of love, but of matter for the pulpit. Birmingham is my place, if it please God to spare me."

During the winter Mr. Watson's health continued delicate. He was subject to frequent attacks of illness, and his strength was never equal to what it had formerly been. By great care, however, he contrived to attend most of his appointments in the circuit, and devoted the leisure time which he could command in completing his Theological Institutes. While he was thus employed, endeavouring to save his own soul, and them that heard him, and to render some service to posterity after his decease, by means of his writings, he understood that two answers to his "Address" were in the course of preparation. One of these soon appeared, under the title of, "Remarks on the Rev. Richard Watson's Views of Church Government," &c. The writer had formerly been a member of an Independent Church; but, having renounced the tenets of Calvinism, and embraced those of Arminius, he united himself to the Methodist body, understanding, it would seem, that, in point of Church government, the Methodists were Independents. When he learned that this was not the fact, he was greatly grieved, and left his new friends as readily as he had formerly left his old ones. His pamphlet, which he appears to have written in the sincerity of his heart, was addressed to a member of the Wesleyan society, and strenuously recommended the principles of Independency to the body; though it never appears to have occurred to the writer to inquire how an absolutely Independent mode of Church government could be made to accord with a religious connection, and an itinerant ministry.

The other answer was said to be written "professionally," at the request of some of the parties to whom Mr. Watson's pamphlet was addressed; and before its appearance, it was made a subject of general conversation. Its author was understood to be personally hostile to Mr. Watson, who alludes to the publication in the following letter, which he addressed to the writer of this narrative; and, at the same time, he gives some important information concerning his early history.

Manchester, March 2d, 1829.

My Dear Friend,—I write to say, that I am so sadly behind with the Institutes, and have so many engagements, that you must excuse me from writing any thing for the Magazine for the next two months; then, if it please God, I shall be at liberty; and, having no work on hand, I will help you cheerfully, and I hope effectually.

I have heard of ——'s manuscript pamphlet. It is a furbishing up of a thing which appeared a year since. The object was to show that I held opposite opinions near thirty years ago. It would have been no very great matter if I had; but the facts of that case are,—

1. That in the early years of my ministry I never read five pages of the Kilham controversy; being in obscure circuits, and studying something better.

2. That when I left the body, that was the result of a personal dispute, not Church government.

3. That I really never turned my attention to those subjects, until I was in the new connection; which I joined only because my quarrel had seemed to shut the door against me among my old friends; and as to which I never was required to make any confession of faith in its discipline.

4. What I saw of the system in operation only confirmed my dislike of it.

5. That my opponents can bring no recorded sentiment of mine in its favour. Mark Robinson attempted to quote from me; but he quotes as mine the sentiments of a man whose memoir I only strung together from documents for the New Connection Magazine; and some passages from the addresses of their conference, when I was secretary; but which are very general; and, indeed, not a personal expression of my own sentiments, any more than our secretary may be considered as giving his own views when he signs the minutes.

These are the materials which, I suppose, have been concocted; all old and second hand. Unfortunately, however, the leading principle maintained is as much at variance with the new connection as ours, and, indeed, with any connection.

The publication here referred to at length appeared, and answered Mr. Watson's anticipations. It had evidently two objects in view.—The first was the subversion of the Methodist discipline; and the second, the defamation of Mr. Watson's character. The execution was worthy of the design. In regard to argument, it was a remarkable instance of special pleading; such as advocates employ, when they speak in favour of a cause which they know to be indefensible. "All was false and hollow," so far as the leading question at issue was concerned; though the writer attempted to

> "Make the worse appear
> The better reason, to perplex and dash
> Maturest counsels."

Mr. Watson's conduct as a public man was misrepresented; and he was treated with insult and contumely. With an opponent so regardless of all the laws of honourable controversy no writer who had a due respect for his own character would deign to contend. The man who would attempt to identify the united societies of the Methodist body, having an itinerant ministry, and one general code of regulations, with Churches founded upon the principles of Independency, could hardly be regarded as serious in his positions and averments; and anonymous dealers in personal slander, who send their publications into the world under the signatures of other men, are mere outlaws in the republic of letters. Mr. Watson wisely suffered this production to sink into its own deserved oblivion. The wickedness of its spirit rendered it sufficiently offensive to every good man; and the subject had no attractions for the men of the world. His "Affectionate Address" was perfectly satisfactory to every candid Methodist who wished to understand the discipline and order of the body; and he had too high sense of the value of life, and of what became him as a minister of Christ, to employ his time in supplying aliment for cavillers.

It is only just to say, that the greater part of the men whom Mr. Watson addressed refused to affix their names to the calumnious pamphlet which was written in reply. It bore, however, the names of twelve persons. Several of these champions of Methodism, as they declared themselves to be, immediately after they had published to the world the most solemn avowal of their attachment to the system, and

their determination to adhere to it, as if in mockery of their reasonings and professions, immediately withdrew from the body, and laboured, with all their might, to divide and scatter the societies with which they were connected.

In concluding the painful subject of the dissensions at Leeds, and the attempts that were made to subvert the Methodist economy, it is proper to state, that these measures met with no encouragement from persons of established character and leading influence in any part of the connection. The hostility of the more active agents might be distinctly traced to personal disappointment and mortification: some of them were scheming speculatists, who had contracted a love of change; and others would have found it very difficult to assign any reason for their conduct.

Mr. Watson's impaired health and constitution rendered his future appointment a matter of some importance and anxiety; and he still considered Birmingham as the most suitable station to which he could be sent. The following letter will explain his views on this subject. It was addressed to the writer of these pages.

Manchester, April 15th, 1829.

My Dear Friend,—As soon as the Institutes are finished, I shall put myself more into your hands; and can help you, I believe, better at Birmingham than in multifarious London. Indeed, I have made up my mind not to go to City-Road, unless by a coercion which I think the conference will not use. My reasons are weighty:—

1. That great mischief would, I see, be done at Birmingham, from which place I have just returned; since the friends there were disappointed twice. They attach, I know, much, very much, more importance to me than I deserve; but they have set their hearts upon my appointment, and have now got five excellent chapels,—three new, and one enlarged.

2. Mrs. Watson's health is so exceedingly precarious, that the City-Road house, with its bustle, would be cruelly oppressive to her.

3. The arduous office of superintending the City-Road circuit, in present circumstances, with the calls I should have from you, and from the missions, &c, would be far too much for my own health.

Private intercourse with my old friends, and especially yourself, and one or two others, would be greatly gratifying; but I should be overwhelmed, because of the delicacy of my health. I cannot do as I have done; though, I thank my gracious God I can do as well as I do in the *regular* work.

The report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, which was published in the spring of this year, was drawn up by Dr. Townley. It states that eighteen missionaries had been sent out in the course of the year; the number of stations occupied by the society's missionaries was one hundred and thirty-eight; the missionaries employed, exclusive of catechists and school masters, amounted to one hundred and ninety; the members in society were thirty-six thousand nine hundred and seventeen, being an increase of upward of two thousand. Of these more than twenty-two thousand were slaves, and upward of six thousand free negroes and persons of colour in the West Indies. More

than seventeen thousand children were under instruction in the mission schools. The income of the society amounted to the noble sum of fifty thousand pounds; being the largest amount ever received by the society in one year; and exceeding the income of the year preceding by six thousand seven hundred and seventy pounds.

Mr. Watson attended the anniversary of the society in London early in May, 1829, when he preached in its behalf on the Sunday morning, at the chapel in Great Queen-street; but he was so indisposed as to be unable to take any part in the proceedings of the public meeting.

On his return from London to Manchester he hastened to complete his Theological Institutes. The following letter, which he addressed to his printer, Mr. James Nichols, the author of "Calvinism and Arminianism Compared in their Principles and Tendency," will show the modest estimate he formed of his own publication, notwithstanding the favourable reception which it had met with from his brethren and the public. Mr. Nichols had printed the greater part of Mr. Watson's works; and his knowledge of divinity and ecclesiastical history, as well as his accurate scholarship, justly entitled him to that confidence which the letter expresses, and which its writer had long cherished.

To Mr. James Nichols.

June 3d.

My Dear Sir,—I commend all my corrections to your care with confidence. I send you all the copy, except one chapter on the Lord's Supper, which will conclude the work. This will not be a long one. In the next parcel please to send me all the sheets that are worked off, that I may finish the index, which I have already made for the former parts, and now must complete.

I am glad that my politics meet your approbation. On episcopacy and Church government I hope I shall not disagree much with a judgment I respect.

I trust I have put the baptismal question in a tolerably clear view; although it is difficult to stir that water without raising mud. Many of our own writers are somewhat obscure. I turned, therefore, from my books, and followed my own deductions from Scripture, according to my plan throughout the work.

I am not, I assure you, elated with my Institutes as a whole; and I ought never to have begun them; but I hope they may lead to something better from some of our own writers in future years. They are at least adapted to the Methodist body, for which they were designed.

I am yours very affectionately.

The concluding part of his Theological Institutes was published on the first of July. It treats of the morals and institutions of Christianity; the duties which men owe to God and to one another; the constitution of the Christian Church; and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The author contends that no particular form of Church government is laid down in the New Testament, as binding upon the consciences of Christians; but that certain offices are there specified, which ought ever to be retained; and principles relative to the discipline of the Church are given, which it is left to the wisdom and piety of Christians to apply, and practically exemplify, under all

providential circumstances, to the end of time. On the subject of Christian morals he often corrects the defective views of Paley; and introduces many discussions of superior value; particularly on the subject of obedience to the civil power, prayer, the sanctity of the Sabbath, slavery, and the subjects and mode of baptism.

In reference to the order of Christian Churches, he observes, with equal piety and truth, "However difficult it may be, in some cases, to adjust modes of Church government, so that, in the view of all, the principles of the New Testament may be fully recognized, and the end for which Churches are collected may be effectually accomplished, this labour will always be greatly smoothed by a steady regard, on each side, to duties as well as to rights. These are equally imperative upon ministers, upon subordinate officers, and upon the private members of every Church. Charity, candour, humility, public spirit, zeal, a forgiving spirit, and a desire, the strong desire, of unity and harmony, ought to pervade all; as well as a constant remembrance of that great and solemn truth, that Christ is the Judge as well as the Saviour of his Churches. While the people are docile, obedient to the word of exhortation, willing to submit in the Lord to those who preside over them, and are charged to exercise Christ's discipline; and while ministers are gentle among them, after the example of St. Paul;—a gentleness, however, which, in his case, winked at no evil, and kept back no truth, and compromised no principle, and spared no obstinate and incurable offender;—while they feed the flock of Christ with sound doctrine, and are intent upon their edification, watching over them as they that must give account, and study, live, and labour, for no other ends, than to present that part of the Church committed to their care, perfect in Christ Jesus; every Church will fall, as it were, naturally, and without effort, into its proper order. Pure and undefiled religion in Churches, like the first poetry, creates those subordinate rules by which it is afterward guarded and governed; and the best canons of both are those which are dictated by the fresh and primitive effusions of their own inspiration."

The completion of the Theological Institutes was to Mr. Watson an occasion of great satisfaction and gratitude. The work had cost him much labour and thought; had been written during intervals of time, snatched from his other engagements and duties, and often in great pain and debility; and had occupied his anxious attention for many years. The approbation and even cordiality with which it was received by his brethren was gratifying to his mind, as his intentions were pure and upright. It is an admirable digest of theological knowledge, sound in doctrine, and presenting throughout an absolute deference to the authority of Scripture. No undue prominence is given to any favourite tenets, but Christian truth appears as one beautiful and harmonious whole. The spirit which pervades it is pious and benevolent; and while the work enlarges the reader's views, and strengthens his belief of Scripture verities, it promotes holy and devout affections. Its principal defect is, an occasional negligence in the style. It is written with great and unabated energy of thought and expression; but the sentences are sometimes too long and involved for a didactic work. The words are generally well chosen, but their

collocation is often capable of considerable improvement; for the author did not, in every instance, devote the requisite time to the correction of what he had written. His design in the composition of this work was to assist the junior preachers of the Wesleyan connection in their theological studies; and it was his intention from the beginning to give the copyright to the body; and the manner in which he did this displayed a delicacy and honour which are worthy of special record. When he committed the work to the press, though his friends were sanguine both as to its execution and sale, he had doubts concerning both; and hence, though money with him was not plentiful, and the details of business were foreign from his habits, he took upon himself the entire risk of publication, and offered the copyright to the connection when it had received the stamp of public approbation, and when the demand for it was such as to render it worthy of acceptance in a pecuniary point of view. As soon as the last part was printed off, he presented the entire work to the book committee in London, and through them to the body.

The conference of 1829 was held in Sheffield; and after a very long debate, it was determined that Mr. Watson should be appointed to the superintendency of the London North circuit, of which City-Road was the head; with the Rev. Joseph Collier, William Naylor, John Anderson, and John Bicknell, as his colleagues. At this conference he preached an admirable sermon on Acts xvii, 28, which he afterward printed in compliance with the request of his brethren then assembled. Their acknowledgments were presented to him for the gift of the great work which he had just completed; and the following record appears in the minutes:—"That the cordial thanks of the conference are due to the Rev. Richard Watson, for his kind and generous gift of the copyright of his Theological Institutes to the Book Room."

At this conference Mr. Watson wrote the following eloquent and just tribute to the memory of Thomas Thompson, Esq., of Hull, which that body unanimously adopted, and published in their minutes:—

"The conference, in its review of circumstances connected with the interests of our missions during the past year, cannot but record, with feelings of deep regret and affectionate remembrance, the death of the late Thomas Thompson, Esq., of Hull, who was for several years one of the general treasurers of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and a liberal contributor to its funds.

"His name stands associated with the memory of the venerable Benson; to whose ministry, at an early period of life, he was greatly indebted, and with whose spirit of fervent piety, and zeal for the salvation of men, he was largely imbued. By his exertions a large district of country, involved at that time in deep ignorance, and characterized by rude opposition to the Gospel, was brought under religious cultivation, and continues to this day to exhibit the fruit of his early and courageous activity in the cause of Christ. The concerns of a successful business, and the worldly prosperity with which it pleased Divine Providence to favour him, had no effect in damping his zeal, or diminishing the force of a piety which retained its primitive character of simplicity and ardour through the whole period of an extended life.

"The manly and uncompromising advocate of truth and righteousness, he employed the powers of a cultivated mind, and a vigorous pen, in exposing the sophistries of infidelity, and other religious errors, and in defending those views of evangelical truth which he thought most conformable to the Holy Scriptures. In those discussions which led to the settlement of the general government of our body, and which produced considerable agitation among us for some time previous to the year 1797, Mr. Thompson's talents and influence were beneficially employed in bringing about that adjustment of our disciplinary system which appears in the minutes of that year. While, on the one hand, he thought it necessary more effectually to provide for the government of the connection, but recently thrown into entirely new circumstances, in consequence of the death of its founder, he, on the other hand, firmly resisted those theories which, framed according to the democratic and levelling politics of the day, tended, under popular pretences, to obstruct the exercise of the pastoral duties of ministers, to enfeeble the exercise of wholesome and Scriptural discipline, to encourage debate and contention, and thereby to destroy the spirituality of our societies. With a clear perception of the true character and genius of Wesleyan Methodism, and with the soundest principles of ecclesiastical government, as drawn from the New Testament, he willingly and affectionately exerted himself to promote a permanent arrangement on the subjects then debated in the connection; and was a leading instrument in effecting that mutual recognition of rights and duties by the parties concerned, which has ever since that period united the preachers and the societies at large in bonds of entire confidence and affection, such as the few dissentients, who have occasionally made the attempt, have not been able to destroy or impair.

"As a member of parliament, his independence and integrity commanded the respect of all parties; and he most cordially gave his influence and exertions to the friends of missions at large, in resisting all encroachments upon religious liberty at home or in the colonies, and in promoting the adoption of those clauses in the East India Company's charter, which threw open to the labours of missionaries the immense region of our eastern possessions.

"Mr. Thompson's memory stands inseparably connected with the history of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, in that form which it has now for many years assumed, and which has led to an extension of its operations, and an increase of its funds, which even his sanguine mind could not anticipate. He took the chair in Leeds at the first district missionary society formed in our connection, and, immediately after, at the formation of the missionary society for the Hull district; and they who had the happiness to be present at those meetings will remember, with the most lively feelings, the power with which he spoke, and that sacred glow of missionary ardour which he so greatly contributed to kindle on both those occasions,—each so peculiarly important, that upon their results the success of carrying the same system of exertion in the cause of the conversion of the heathen world, throughout all our societies and congregations, seemed greatly to depend.

"With the same readiness to give his influence and assistance to the general society, while yet in its infancy, he kindly accepted the office of general treasurer; and held that office, until, by his example,

and by the spirit which breathed in all his addresses from the chair at the annual meetings of the society, he had excited an equal interest in its operations among those who were best fitted to succeed him, and to give to it the influence of their character, talent, and activity, as members of its committee. He now 'rests from his labours; and his works do follow him.'"

Mr. Watson's return to London was hailed by a numerous circle of friends; and though the station was not one which he would have chosen for himself, because of the onerous duties connected with it, which were sufficient to exercise the full strength of a man in robust health; yet he regarded the appointment as providential, and entered upon his labours with superior pleasure. His appearance at this time was sickly and languid; his constitution during his residence in Manchester had been evidently impaired by disease; but his intellectual powers were as vigorous as ever, his habits of activity were unabated, and his piety had acquired a greater richness and maturity. He seemed to feel that the continuance of his life was a matter of extreme uncertainty; and he lived, and conversed, and preached, as became a man who almost daily expected to hear the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh. Go ye out to meet him."

On his arrival in the circuit, he cherished a strong desire to witness the prosperity of the work of God; and therefore laboured to remove every hinderance out of the way. In a few places he found there were individuals in the society whose minds were prejudiced against their ministers, and the discipline of the connection, by inflammatory and misleading publications; and he sought those persons out, and conversed with them, showing them that they had been deceived by misrepresentation. He was successful in this labour of love, and soon saw every society at unity with itself. The circuit was considerably in debt; and he instituted a subscription among the more opulent friends for the removal of this burden; remarking, that the moral effect of pecuniary embarrassments, both upon individuals and public bodies, is always injurious; and he himself presented a handsome donation to the fund which was thus raised. The people flocked in large numbers, and with deep interest, to his ministry; and though they found his sermons less abundant in metaphor than they had formerly been, in originality and depth of thought they were not at all inferior to his former ministrations, and even surpassed them in evangelical sentiment and holy feeling. His private conversation, which was always intellectual and improving, and free and unconstrained, was eminently spiritual and edifying. To the afflicted members of the society he was kind and attentive; and he regularly devoted a portion of his time every week to pastoral visitation; for he regarded the societies as committed to his care; and that he might render his final account with joy, he deemed it necessary not only to teach them "publicly, but from house to house," paying special attention to the younger branches of each family.

At this time, indeed, his mind was greatly impressed with the peculiar situation of young people, the offspring of pious parents, and the children of the Church; particularly those of them who had enjoyed the advantages of education, and were not decidedly pious. He saw that much of the popular literature of the age was calculated to divert

their attention from their spiritual interests, and to produce a general skepticism in reference to the great truths of revelation. For the purpose of removing the doubts which some of them might have imbibed, and of leading them to a cordial reception of the truth as it is in Jesus, and thus to prepare them for the enjoyment of vital godliness, he employed his leisure time in the composition of a small manual, adapted to their instruction. Upon this work he bestowed more than ordinary care.

It has been already observed, that when Mr. Watson removed to Manchester, he was appointed honorary secretary to the Wesleyan Missionary Society; and that, during his residence in that town, he continued in regular correspondence with his colleagues in London, on subjects connected with the affairs of that institution. On his return to London, he still sustained the same office, and afforded the most efficient assistance in carrying the plans of the society into practical effect. He regularly attended the meetings of the committee, prepared several of the most important official documents, superintended the studies and training of some of the missionaries, and generally took a part in the services connected with their ordination.

The following letter, addressed by Mr. Watson to his late colleague, the Rev. John Hannah, who still remained in Manchester, will show his sympathy with his suffering friend. It was written on occasion of the death of a child, aged nearly ten years; and suggests topics of comfort admirably adapted to alleviate the bitterness of such a bereavement:—

London, Feb. 9th, 1830.

My Dear Sir,—I sincerely condole with you and with Mrs. Hannah on the loss of your long-afflicted child, who I had hoped was appointed to be spared to you, so favourable a change appeared to have taken place before we left Manchester. I was greatly affected at the account your letter gives of her severe sufferings: but they are now over;—the "judgment," temporary; the mercy eternal. Let not the Christian Rachel then weep for her children as though they were not; they are in the bosom of Him who so often says to health and life, as to the disciples of old, "Suffer the little children to come unto me:" the health which played in their sparkling countenances flits slowly away; the life which binds them to us ebbs out; but they only fulfil the command of their Lord, and no longer restrain them from his immediate presence. The gracious preparation of your daughter's mind for a heavenly world is a most consoling reflection. Not that any fear could be entertained at her years; but that work which might have been done in a moment, by the sovereign grace of God, in the article of death, was suffered to commence and proceed under your own observation; thereby exhibiting how the majesty of heavenly truth, which angels desire to look into, condescends to the understanding of a child; and that so far are the mind and the body from being identified, that the former can, under the Divine teaching and influence, grow rapidly to a maturity beyond its years, while the growth of the other is still bound down to its own laws, which no power (except it were, in the proper sense, miraculous) can relax or invigorate. To me the case of sickening and pious children is specially interesting in these views, although often torturing to the feelings. Without this light, no scene on earth would be so

dark, none more favourable for temptation to urge against the love of our heavenly Father. But all is love to us. The justice is love, because it is an impressive, nay, often a deeply cutting exhibition of the evil of sin, which we all need to feel still more forcibly; and the stroke falls upon the innocent lamb, that the sheep themselves may learn not to go astray. But what is the measure of love to them? They will tell us in those blissful regions, the felicity of which is summed up in their being for ever with the Lord.

The report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society for 1829 was published with all convenient speed when the accounts were closed at the end of the year. It states that twenty-one missionaries had been sent out in the course of the year; that the number of missionaries employed by the society was increased to two hundred and ten; that there were thirty-nine thousand six hundred and sixty members of religious society on the various mission stations, being an increase of two thousand seven hundred and forty-three; and that the income of the society, including the sum of nearly nine thousand pounds in legacies, was £56,063. 15*s*. 0*d*. The conclusion of this report was written by Mr. Watson; and bears distinct marks of his mind and manner.

"The committee cannot report the contributions of the year without recognizing the hand of God, so often and so manifestly upon us for good in this blessed work. To the arrangements of his providential government are to be attributed those opportunities for exertion which are so singularly opening to the labours of missionaries in the most distant, and for ages the most inaccessible, parts of the heathen world. It is to his sacred and powerful call to the arduous labours and the high duties of the office of the missionary, that we owe those free and cheerful offers of service which have never left the society destitute of suitable men for its numerous and various stations; and to that same gracious influence upon his people at home, softening the heart by the sympathies of charity, and expanding it by zeal, we are bound to attribute those liberalities which have been from year to year increasing, and which, notwithstanding unusual commercial depression, have crowned the last with extraordinary productiveness. In this obvious and striking harmony of the Divine operation in opening the fields of exertion; in sending forth his own graciously-prepared agents; and in engaging the prayers, the interests, and the liberalities of the Churches for the support of their plans of usefulness, we have continued and cheering proofs that 'God is with us;' and the committee trust that, animated by these almost visible signs of the cloud of the Divine presence going before 'the sacramental host of his elect,' the friends of missions will resolve anew 'to consecrate themselves unto the Lord,' and, with all the friends of similar societies, to pledge their hearts and hands again to a service which is nothing unless it is every thing, and which can never aim at any thing at all worthy of the glory and the grace of our Divine religion, if it aim at less than the subjugation of the whole world to its hallowing and saving sway.

"To the continued zeal and benevolence of the friends of the society the committee again commend that great system of operation now confined to them. In order to the right management of all these varied and difficult missions, they earnestly ask the prayers of their friends,

conscious how entirely the success of the whole depends upon the Divine blessing. For their support the past gives them assurance as to the future; for if any motive was ever felt influential upon feeling, or imperative upon principle, that motive can have lost no portion of its original force. Was it the dark and wretched state of the world? Alas, it remains, as to the vast majority of its inhabitants, dark and wretched still! Was it the opportunities for exertion opened by circumstances appearing to indicate a special providence? Circumstances of a character equally striking still beckon us forward. Was it the demonstration that the Gospel had lost none of its original power to reclaim the savage, to elevate the mind prostrated by superstition, and to purify the most unholy? Negroes, Caffres, Hindoos, idolaters of every class, and pagans of every name, year by year, rise up, the fruit of the unabated efficacy of the same Gospel, and call the universal Saviour 'blessed.' Was it the interesting appeal made by Christian schools? Their number is multiplied; and 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings,' taught to lisp a name their ancestors never heard, God still 'perfects praise.' Was it the cry of heathens themselves, 'Come over and help us,' heard by St. Paul but in vision, but heard by modern missionary societies in fact? New calls of this extraordinary kind are constantly still sounding in our ears, from the islands of the Pacific, from the wilds of Africa, and from the plains of India, where death-like stillness formerly reigned, and not a breathing of religious desire after truth seemed to heave a single breast amid their millions of inhabitants. Was the animating motive, the signs of the times? Still, whether the interpretation of them be bright or gloomy, it equally calls to duty. If the war of principles, of light and darkness, must be rekindled, we know that 'the battle is the Lord's,' and he who wars under his banners shall partake the glory of his victory. If, on the other hand, the clouds are retiring after a long night of ages, never to be collected again to darken the nations of the earth; if every arm is 'drying up' which had lifted itself in daring defiance of the Lord's Christ; if God is hewing 'the stone out of the mountain without hands,' and is silently setting up his kingdom by his secret blessing upon his word preached and circulated by his servants, so that it is filling 'the whole earth;' then blessed surely is every agent whom God employs in a work so full of mercy to man, and which shall display the glory of our Christ, to the acknowledgment and worship of every nation, and kindred, and people. 'Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen.'"

At this time the mission in Jamaica was opposed with great violence. The house of assembly appointed a committee to inquire into the operation and effects of missions conducted by "sectarians," as all ministers were denominated who were not in immediate connection with the Church of England. This committee drew up a most injurious report, founded upon evidence at once incompetent and suspicious. The missionaries were imprisoned; and one of them, Mr. Grimsdall, died under the harsh and cruel treatment which he received. Another of them, Mr. Orton, returned to England with impaired health, and drew up an affecting narrative of these iniquitous proceedings. In the meanwhile, the Report of the Jamaica Sectarian Committee was re-

printed in England; and every attempt was made, both at home and in that colony, to cover the mission with odium, and, if possible, to break it up. Under these circumstances Mr. Watson prepared an Appendix to the Report of the Missionary Society, containing Mr. Orton's narrative, with his own observations upon the facts of the case; in which he furnishes a complete justification of the missionaries, and exposes the heartless calumnies by which it was intended to obstruct their useful labours.

CHAPTER XXII.

Mr. Watson publishes his "Conversations for the Young"—Annual Meeting of the Missionary Society in 1830—Mr. Watson's Speech—Letter to the Rev. Samuel Entwisle—Meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society—Resolutions of Conference on Slavery—Letter to Dr. Emory—Address to the Congregation at City-Road on Slavery—Mr. Watson's Sermon on God with us—Missionary Report for 1830—Speech at the Anti-Slavery Meeting—Address to the Methodists on Slavery—Supplement to the Methodist Hymn Book—Mr. Watson publishes the Life of Mr. Wesley—Conference of 1831.

NOTWITHSTANDING the pressure of Mr. Watson's duties, as the superintendent of an important circuit, and the attention which he was called to devote to the concerns of the missions, particularly in the West Indies, by his unparalleled diligence he found time to execute various literary projects. In the spring of the year 1830 he published his "Conversations for the Young; designed to promote the profitable reading of the Holy Scriptures;" a work of great utility, which he had written in his intervals of time during the autumn and winter. It was intended to be of a miscellaneous character; and in this view the plan is very judiciously laid. A young person, actuated by good motives, and seriously inclined, is introduced making inquiries relative to the Holy Scriptures, and the nature of true religion. His questions call forth replies, which embody a large mass of important information, the substance of many an elaborate treatise. In the course of twenty-four conversations the youthful inquirer, and the teacher who acts as his "guide, philosopher, and friend," go through every book of Scripture; and instruction, remarkable for its solidity, importance, and variety, is elicited on every subject which was likely to be started by an inquisitive and intelligent mind. The volume is a neat and beautiful epitome of Scripture antiquities; containing, also, all the great principles of Biblical truth and personal religion. The style of this volume has great merit, and differs considerably from that of the author's other publications. It is easy, terse, and elegant; suited to the subjects and the occasion. Nothing of a polemical or sectarian character occurs in it; and hence it has been read with equal approbation by Christians of different denominations; and the demand for it has been extensive.

The annual meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society was held this year in the City-Road chapel, on Monday, May 3d, 1830; the Right Hon. the earl of Mount Cashel in the chair. Preparatory sermons had been preached before the society by the Rev. Messrs. Henry F. Burder, of Hackney, Robert Newton, and Theophilus Lessey. An

eloquent pamphlet, entitled, "A New Model for Missions," had then just made its appearance, and created some attention, proposing a plan of missionary operations, which the anonymous writer, theorist as he was, could hardly deem practicable, in the present state of the Church. It was, that all the different missionary societies should be merged in one; and that its management should be confided to several distinct committees, each of which should turn its exclusive attention to one peculiar and separate field of labour in the heathen world. Mr. Burder, who moved the first resolution at the public meeting, had controverted the reasonings of this publication in his sermon, which was preached in the same chapel on the evening of the preceding Thursday. The Rev. Dr. Steinkopff moved the following resolution: "That the continued success of the missions to the negroes of the West India colonies, and the prudence, fidelity, and fortitude of those of the missionaries who have been exposed to unmerited reproach and persecution, afford additional reasons for the support and extension of a system of religious care and instruction which at once conveys the direct blessings of Christianity to the slave population, and tends more fully to prepare them for all those ameliorations which it may be the purpose of a wise and benevolent legislature to introduce and extend."

This resolution was seconded by Mr. Watson; and the particulars which have been just stated will explain the allusions contained in the following speech, which he delivered on the occasion:—

Our excellent friend, who moved the first resolution, told us, with great truth and force, that our success is not the rule of our duty. I agree with him that it is not. It is a principle of the greatest importance, that, in this work, immediate success is by no means the rule of duty. If this and every other missionary society had been toiling for many years without any success, the obligation to speak in these meetings, and to contribute to these societies, and to send forth missionaries, would, in my judgment, according to the principles of the word of God, have been precisely the same: and yet I fear that our patience would not have endured that trial. If we had toiled all night, and had taken nothing, we should, in the morning, have thrown our nets away, and have concluded that we were not called to the profession of fishermen. We have, however, not been called to that trial; but our success, calculated with the greatest possible sobriety, appears not only to have put to flight the fearful forebodings of the timid, but to have exceeded the most sanguine calculations of the warmest spirits. And this success is God's broad seal upon our work. For if there be truth in our religion, such effects as have been produced in the instruction of negroes, and in introducing them into the spiritual liberty of the Gospel; in the civilizing, humanizing, and Christianizing of the fierce Caffres; in bringing Hindoos, besotted with superstition, to cast their idols to the moles and to the bats, and to subscribe with their hands to the Lord, prove that a more than human hand has been with us. Men who were aliens from God have become, in the true Christian sense, children of God, and heirs of immortality.

Now, my lord, if there be truth in the statements of Scripture, such effects could not have been produced but by Divine agency; and, if so, then they are the visible sanction of almighty God impressed upon

our labours; and so far from being moved by the charges of fanaticism or enthusiasm which are brought against us, we will wear them, not as badges of our shame, but as our boast and our glory. It has been said, that we rejoice in the success with which God has been pleased to crown other societies. We do rejoice in it; and we are happy to know that though this society comes forward, occupying the first public day in this glorious, this consecrated month, to report the triumphs of religion, other societies will come forward in their order, and they, too, will have their triumphs to report. We lay our trophies at the feet of our great Lord in this temple; and they are collecting theirs, to lay them before him in their respective temples, and to acknowledge that he is Lord of all. It is not one of the solitary tribes of Israel, my lord, which has been employed in this glorious warfare; but we may take up the language of Deborah, and say, "Out of Ephraim there was a root of them against Amalek: Benjamin was among the people.—Out of Machir came down governors; out of Zebulun, them that handle the pen of the writer; and the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; Barak was sent on foot into the valley. Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field." All have been warm in the contest; all have partaken in the glory of the victory; and, in the language of that same elevated ode, perhaps a prophetic one, looking to these future times, we exclaim, "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

I confess, my lord, that one of the most interesting effects I can contemplate from these meetings and associations, next to their great effect of propagating the Gospel among the heathen, is their tendency to abolish all that which may properly be called a sectarian spirit; that they tend to gather together the children of God, who have been divided more in principle and affection than by place. If this were a mere matter of sentiment, it is a sentiment so hallowed and delightful, that, even as a sentiment, I should deeply value it; and I would not that my heart should be divested of it. It is very true, we might go on, as the various religious bodies went on formerly, with something less of this. The established Church might throw on us a look of haughty contempt, and we might return it with a scowl of defiance; we and our Calvinistic brethren might wrathfully wield our quinquarticular controversy, and dip our pens in gall; and our excellent friends, the Baptists, might convert the waters of the sanctuary into the waters of bitterness and separation. All this might be done, and perhaps the common Father might, in pity, deal better with us than we were disposed to do with each other. We might go on in this way; but what should we gain by this? That I cannot answer; but I think I can easily tell how much we should lose. We should lose character, my lord: Christianity has lost character in consequence of its divisions.—It has been the triumph of infidels, that there has been a malignant and persecuting spirit in the Churches of Christ; and they have scornfully written upon the very temples of the Church of the living God, in legible characters, "See how these Christians hate;"—a motto only fit for the gates of hell. We have been attempting, of late years, to obliterate this reproving motto; and though there are a few remains of the characters not quite effaced, hard as the marble is, we shall, I trust,

succeed. I hope we shall all come, without exception, to that sentiment which is embodied in what is, I believe, the oldest formulary extant in the Christian Church; the oldest form of sound words, which may be traced to the earliest ages: "I believe in the communion of saints." But we should lose strength, also; for if unity be not strength, and if division be not weakness, we must unlearn the lessons of history, and invert the inferences of experience. We should also lose good acquaintance: some of our best friendships would have been lost, with all their advantages. There are many of us who now know and love each other, who had never known each other, but as we have known the Lord; and the anniversaries of such a month as this extend our acquaintance with the wise and good, not only of our own country, but of the whole world. We can recollect the effect produced in former years, by the presence of holy men from distant Churches and distant lands; how we were excited by their warmth, and how our virtues were strengthened by their eminent piety. The circle of our friendship now embraces the wisest and best men that earth has in it; and it is still enlarging by the diffusion of this catholic spirit, and these Christian associations. Perhaps, but for this, we had all been like the moody, melancholy prophet, who went into retirement, and mourned that he alone was left of all the worshippers of the God of Israel, and we had still been ignorant of those noble spirits who, in various parts of the world, have not bowed the knee to Baal. We should have lost something more; we should have lost that unutterable feeling which is expressed by the Prophet Isaiah, in a manner which nothing but the power of inspiration could have dictated, when he calls the Church not to look within this, that, or the other little enclosure; not to go to the dark and narrow corners of this or the other of her sects, but when he says, "Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons come from afar, and thy daughters are nursed at thy side: then shalt thou see and flow together, and thine heart shall fear;"—the very fear of joy, the strong impression of awe mingled with exultation, such as an assembly like this produces; —"and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee." We should have lost this fine impression; and, what is more valuable than that, we should have lost our portion in that blessed legacy of our Saviour, who said, "Peace," not strife and division, but "peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you."— But, my lord, there is perhaps an excess even on this side; and it was that amiable excess, I have no doubt, which led a very powerful and liberal writer lately to propose that we should carry this unity into an absolute amalgamation; and instead of having various societies in friendly correspondence, we should all form but one grand missionary institution. But on this subject I agree with my estimable friend, Mr. Burder, in the arguments he made use of in that excellent sermon which he preached to us on Thursday. I am sure he is no bigot; and I hope I am no bigot either; but I fully subscribe to his principle; that our true *oneness* is not that of amalgamation, but of generous and cordial affection. It has been a frequent and a favourite metaphor made use of by several eminent speakers and writers on this subject, to compare the fraternal union of Churches, to the union of the colours

in the rainbow; and a very beautiful metaphor it is. It was not till lately that the Church of Christ has been at all entitled to this comparison; for, if formerly it was like one, it was so distinct in its lines of colour, and with edges so sharp and defined, that they seemed to be intended to cut each other through the whole span of the arch. For my part I should not admire such a rainbow as this; neither should I be much taken with a rainbow of one colour only: I am afraid we should begin to dispute as to what colour this should be; and if we agreed as to that, we should not long rest satisfied with it. One party would wish to have it enlivened with a little more red; and another would have it sobered with a little more purple. For my part I am contented with the rainbow of nature, with its distinct yet commingling hues, soft, beautiful, varied, one; and if we could see all the Churches of Christ worthy to be compared to such an appearance, we might, in the language of one of the writers of the Apocrypha, say, "When thou seest the rainbow, bless Him that made it; very glorious is it to behold, and the hands of the Almighty have bended it;" and I have no desire that the union of the Churches should be more perfect than this, till we enter into the bright and colourless light of eternity, and see "eye to eye and face to face."

There is another topic which I take to be of very great interest, suggested to me by some particulars in this report, and in the reports of other societies: it is the effect of missionary operations in the civilization and moral improvement of savage men. There was a time, I believe, when there were theorists living, who preferred the savage to the civilized state; who preferred the man in the wood, to man surrounded with all the advantages of enlightened society. Such theorists, I believe, have died with their dreams; and the passion now is to extend civilization, and to carry it through the whole earth. I have no doubt this is in the order of God and his providence; but, my lord, it is no easy matter to civilize men without Christianity; and if any person were to allege the states of antiquity, I think we might reply that, in the modern sense of the word, these states were not civilized. If we take civilization to imply that mankind live under equal laws, and enjoy all that liberty which is requisite to general order and prosperity, we may affirm that none of the most celebrated states of antiquity were civilized; that the bulk of the people were brutal, ferocious, and enslaved; and that the splendour with which they appear on the pages of history is but "barbaric pomp and gold." In the middle ages, Christianity was employed in civilizing the nations of Europe: its progress was, however, remarkably slow; and the reason was, that the Christianity applied was a mixed and adulterated Christianity. The fatal principle, my lord, as you well know, was introduced, to treat the body of the people like children, not as men; and for Christianity, they gave them superstition; hiding from them the manly and elevating truths with which it arouses the dormant spirit. So slow is man to learn, that the contrary experiment has been put in operation on a large scale, only by two of the great and leading nations of the earth; Great Britain and the United States of America. The precise character of this experiment is to make the plain simple verities of Christianity, by the circulation of the Scriptures, and by preaching the word of God, to bear on the moral and civil condition of the whole body of the people.

This experiment had, and still has, a vast mass of superstition and prejudice to fight against; but this has been the result,—that these are the two countries which lead on the great march of nations, and are in fact the lights of the world. Their liberty, and public virtue, and religion, are set on high, and are hailed as an example by the wise and good in distant lands who wish to conform their institutions to ours.—I know there has been great debate about the philosophy of this fact; but I will go for the solution of the difficulty to the South Sea Islands and to South Africa; and I go there with a confidence of finding it.—Now it is a fact, my lord, and a most interesting one, that there are, in those places, whole communities of men, who were but a very short time ago savages, and as ferocious and as bad as perfectly savage man can be, and that these have been raised into civilization; and a civilization, too, more perfect than our own. There are now whole tribes of men enjoying all the advantages of social life, paying respect to the Lord's day, and to the various institutions of religion, industrious, temperate, religious, living under just laws, and in perfect peace: and what is the solution of all this?—that from the first commencement of the process of their civilization, the verities of the Christian religion, in their simple form and majesty, were made to bear on their minds.—They were treated as men, not as children; there was no superstition presented to nip the opening intellect and to palliate vice; but the doctrines of man's fall, and his recovery, and his responsibility, and his need of the Gospel, and of the influences of the Holy Spirit, and the approach of a future judgment, were taught in all their native simplicity: these were the truths which entered into the very elements of their civilization, and the civil superstructure has been built solely upon them. What do I infer from this, but that missionary societies have pointed out the true royal road to civilization, and the best means to create new states, and to reform old ones? The application of this to ourselves is highly important. If we wish to promote the moral improvement of our country, as every benevolent and Christian man will do, we must learn by what has taken place in these distant stations, that the only great instrument by which we can work, is to make the great truths of our holy religion to bear upon the mind and conscience of the mass of the people. You, my lord, stand at the head of a faithful body of men in the sister country, who have made this trial; and the effect, I have no doubt, has been such as to cheer you and your compatriots in your labours. You are making a great impression there; I have been informed that the revenues of the Loch Dergh, in Ireland, to which so many people used to go on pilgrimage, have fallen off nine tenths!—You have annihilated nine tenths, and you will annihilate the last; and if you have not made the same progress every where, yet let this circumstance encourage yourself and every man who takes a part in this great work. Yes, my lord, let but this mighty engine be worked, and, chaotic as may be the state of your country, you strike into it the grand principle of order, and the various elements will arrange themselves around it; all shall be light, and life, and happiness; and the glory of rescuing and raising Ireland shall be given, not to human policy, but to the cross of our Saviour.

It struck me while the report was in reading, that all our missionary enterprises, all our attempts to spread Christianity abroad, do, in point

of fact, tend to increase our sympathies with the external circumstances of the oppressed and miserable of all lands. It is impossible for men to care for the souls of others without caring for their bodies also.—We have an instance of this in the case of the suttees. I admire the men who made the cry of the Hindoo widow heard in Leadenhall-street and in parliament; rich must be their satisfaction who have caused these fires to be extinguished; the blessing of those who were ready to perish will come upon them; and the widow's heart now sings for joy. This is their reward; but they would have accomplished nothing but for the influence of missionary societies and Bible societies. We all felt that it was a monstrous thing to send our Bibles and our missionaries to India, and not to go respectfully but firmly to government, and say, "There are hundreds of women annually consumed in those horrid fires; and however far you may extend liberty of conscience, it can never extend to the toleration of murder." The voice of justice and humanity has been heard; the shield of British protection has been thrown over the helpless; and the bereaved widow feels herself secure under the shadow of Christian law.

The same effect will follow as to colonial slavery. We cannot care for the salvation of the negro, without caring for his emancipation from bondage. My lord, I hold it as the sacred duty of every missionary to the West Indies to apply himself to his spiritual work, and to that alone. I hold it to be a principle, a sacred principle, that as nothing can be done by the negro for himself, it must be done by us for him; and that his cause must be taken up here. But it is such a cause, that just in proportion as the Bible Society and missionary societies fan our Christianity into activity, we must all bind ourselves to it, if we would act in consistency with our profession; and never turn from it, till at last this great national sin and reproach are wiped away from us for ever. For what are the facts of the case? A Christian people hold in abject and interminable slavery a number of persons who have never forfeited their liberty, either by being conquered in war, or by any crimes which they have committed. They have never given up their right to be free. A Christian people, my lord, professing to believe that the observance of the Sabbath is obligatory, excludes them, for the most part, from the rest of the Sabbath; a Christian people, professing to reverence public worship, shuts them out by neglect, by absolute neglect, from all the sanctities and felicities of worship; we profess a religion of justice, and we exact from them what labours we please, and give them what reward we please; we leave them in the hands of mercenary agents, who have the power of exercising ten thousand acts of tyranny over those who have no effectual means of redress; and we set up a claim to their unborn infants, through all the generations to come, to subject them to the same degradation and slavery. I insist upon it, my lord, that Christianity cannot bear this: its fraternal principle forbids it; for they are our brethren; and the slave holder himself must be told that they are our brethren: its mercy forbids it: its stern, uncompromising justice forbids it. And I shall take this opportunity of stating that, since a great national movement will take place, since a general expression of the feelings of the Christian public will soon be called for by presenting the cause of near a million of our fellow men, and fellow subjects, to the justice of the

British parliament, all who feel interested in behalf of missions are bound to second this benevolent design. For whatever improvement may be made in the system, I am one of those who believe that a thing radically wrong can never be made good. The last slave act of the assembly of Jamaica, with its two hundred provisions, has reached us. Why, if a law of this kind, a law which takes cognizance of life in detail, were to pass in this country, we should have endless litigation, and the number of lawyers must be doubled. But really, my lord, there is a blessed complexity and simplicity in West Indian law; for, after all, who is to enforce all these things? Is the negro to implead his master? he who is groaning under the lash,—is he to come into court for justice? No; to him what is good in these wretched laws is and must be a dead letter; and that which controls, and grinds, and debases, alone is operative and efficient. There is no protection for the negro but what the law makers choose to carry into effect. In this country alone can this oppressed race find friends and patrons; and it becomes us therefore to advocate their cause in the mild way of representing their wrongs to the legislature of our country; and we shall follow in the line of honourable names, a Wilberforce, the silver flow of whose eloquence you never heard ruffled but when it came in contact with this indignant subject; the light of whose benignant countenance was never darkened but when confronting oppression and wrong; a man whose life, I trust, almighty God will spare, till he shall hear of some grand legislative act which shall terminate for ever the wrongs of Africa;—a Buxton, who has taken the place of Wilberforce in parliament, as the representative of the philanthropy of the country;—and, though not in parliament, but, "handling the pen of the writer," in this just cause, a Stephen;—and that excellent man, Mr. Zachary Macaulay, whose labours in putting forth those valuable publications which are disabusing the public mind, and bringing the case in all its force and reason to bear upon the British public, are above all praise;—names, I know, dishonoured among many; and what name is not, that is engaged in such a cause? The world reserves its claps and shouts for men of another character; but their names will live in records which are imperishable,—in the records of the Church of Christ: they will live there; for though they are not her theologians, or the ministers of her sanctuary, they have been employed in the highest and most exalted work one can conceive men to be engaged in; to draw Christianity forth from the walks of private life, to enthrone her on the seat of legislation; and to teach senators that, as there is nothing too mean for the mercies of Christianity, so there is nothing so high but it must bow to the mandate of her authority.

An allusion is made in this resolution to the persecutions in Jamaica, and to the missionaries who have been incarcerated in prisons there. We have one emaciated missionary on this platform; and, I think, another, who had the honour of being imprisoned a great many years ago; and how many missionaries have we had imprisoned in Jamaica! I have in my hand a list of them: there was Campbell, and Williams, and Wiggins, and Grimsdall, and Whitehouse, and Orton: and all this from Christians! All this from men whose slaves we have been instructing, and who are indebted to us for their improvement in temperance and honesty; all this from men who owe to the exertions of this

society more than they can ever repay. And what has been their conduct in return for all this? They have of late enacted a law to shut out negroes from religious instruction, and to paralyze missionary exertions for their benefit; and this on the report of what they call their sectarian committee; and the principal evidence on which it is to be recommended to his majesty's government seems to have rested upon three persons; and who were they? One was the chop-house and tavern keeper to the honourable house of assembly. The second was a contracter for public buildings; and the third was a man already notorious for assisting in the imprisonment of your missionaries in that horrible jail in the parish of St. Ann's: and upon the evidence of these three worthies, a report comes out charging your missionaries with preaching sedition, and various other crimes; and a bill is founded upon it, which now awaits the royal signature. I wish I could believe that all this was mistake and misapprehension; but in my own judgment I am perfectly persuaded that the whole rests solely upon the principle of determined hatred to Christianity, because it is opposed to slavery. His majesty will not give it his signature, we are confident. No, there will be this soft reflection for him in his dying moments, that he has never lent his signature to any act of religious persecution; but, like his venerable father, he will have this consolation, that he has been the steady friend of religious liberty. I must say it, to the credit of our missionaries in Jamaica, that when this act had passed, and was sent home for signature, they all united to write, that if the missionary committee should direct them to submit to it, they must obey, and give up their charge; that they laid upon us; but if we forbid them not, they will proceed in their work, and are ready to go to prison. Yes, we have men willing to suffer, and even to die; and these are not the men to be forsaken by this society, or by the religious world. We know what the sentiment of the British parliament is,—how they redressed, by one act, the persecutions in Barbadoes; and I trust, by the exertions of the friends of our missionaries, and of the Baptists, in the island of Jamaica, the shield of British liberty will be thrown over them; and that liberty, which they have never forfeited, and which they have a right to enjoy in common with all British subjects, may be fully secured to them. This day, my lord, is the anniversary of the death of Dr. Coke, sixteen years ago. That is a name always to be mentioned with honour and veneration by us; a man whose ardent mind kindled the flame of missionary exertions in our societies, and whose spirit is now rejoicing in the success of his labours. He was the man who first carried our exertions to the West Indies, and was the father and founder of that mission which has brought so many sons to glory, and introduced so many into the liberty of the Gospel. May we possess his spirit, and take up that work which he has left us as a legacy, and be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in it, until the whole of those interesting colonies be filled with the light of the glorious Gospel!

A few days after the services of this anniversary were concluded, Mr. Watson visited Bath, for the purpose of affording assistance at the annual meeting of the Auxiliary Missionary Society for that district. At that time the Rev. Samuel Entwisle, son of the Rev. Joseph Entwisle, and one of the Wesleyan ministers, had been compelled by ill

health to leave his circuit, and was at his father's house in that city, languishing under the power of disease, and apparently hastening to "the house appointed for all living." Mr. Watson had a very strong regard for this excellent young man, dying in the midst of his years and usefulness, as well as for his venerable parent, and intended to visit and encourage him under the pressure of his sufferings; but was disappointed through the want of time. On his return to London, therefore, he addressed to his afflicted friend a letter of affection and sympathy, which was made a means of great spiritual benefit to him during the remainder of his life. The topics which the letter contains, and the manner in which they were proposed, were well calculated to produce this effect. The following is an extract from this valuable document:—

To the Rev. Samuel Entwisle, Bath.

London, May 14th, 1830.

My Dear Brother,—In the midst of sufferings, growing, I fear, greater daily, two circumstances call for your peculiar gratitude,—that you have not now for the first time to seek refuge from the storm; and that the very preparation for that ministry from which we regret to see you so early discharged, more immediately led your thoughts to those truths, in their evidence, harmony, and fulness, which now are the only rock on which you can repose. O the suitableness of the blessed Gospel to man in every state! to suffering, dying man most of all! The grand reason of pardon and acceptance is the precious blood which our Lord shed for us, and which now sprinkles a throne, which for that very reason is and must be only a throne of grace to all who believingly draw near to God through him. This is our plea, a plea which leads us wholly out of our sinful, polluted, guilty selves, to that on which the eye of justice can look and be satisfied; to that which sets mercy free from all restraint, to pour herself forth in richest influence in the office of saving, saving to the uttermost all that appeal to mercy alone. My dear friend, here you rest, I know; and when you are tempted to doubt, to that grand resting point cleave with all your soul. The more steadily you do it, the more you honour your Saviour's atonement, and the more you magnify the wisdom and love of the Father; you commit your case then to the naked merit of the true Sacrifice, suffering nothing to claim the smallest share as auxiliary to that which is infinite and everlasting; and you are bold to claim blessings corresponding to its height, and depth, and length, and breadth; blessings varied as your wants, and eternal as your nature. That plea has availed for you already; you know its availing power; you had it on your lips when you first tasted the graciousness of pardoning love; and by it you have found access to God, in all those sweeter moments of intimate access to him with which you have since been favoured Its power is this moment and every moment the same; and by it you shall obtain strength to suffer, and courage to die. Deep and joyful are the words of Christ, "I am the way;" the way to the Father, to conscious fellowship, sanctifying, transforming intercourse, assurances of paternal love, to heaven itself. Into that way faith brings us; and all believing acts (which may be as many as our thoughts of Christ) prove how directly it brings us to the Father, and

the Father to us. But sickness, and especially sickness unto death, has its peculiar trials. The thoughts may wander; the spirits flag; the fears of nature rise up, and for a time shake the soul; and the enemy pursues us to the last step from water to land. Here, then, is the great office of filial confidence. If when an enemy you were reconciled by his death, much more, being reconciled, you shall be saved by his life; by his intercession for you in heaven, and that gracious help which he sends from above. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Why? Because he cannot slay me in anger; even that stroke is love. I am persuaded, says St. Paul, that "he will keep that which I have committed to him against that day." Why? "For I *know* whom I have believed." And you know him; his love, wisdom, power; his gracious visits, his kind forbearance, his tender sympathy, that "knows your frame, and remembers that you are but dust;" that he will not fail to say of you in the languor of your sinking nature, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Because every thing in Christ inspires confidence, unlimited confidence, and this entire reliance is essential to our peace, we are commanded to look to Christ, to run our course looking unto Jesus. When Stephen was dying, he saw Jesus at the right hand of God. Then on the same glorious sight may your eye, my dear brother, rest, the eye of your steadfast faith, till faith is absorbed in the glorious vision of your Lord himself.

The measure of affliction, and the duration of suffering, are in the hands of Him who cannot err; and he will give strength for the day. It is lawful, with submission, to make these matters of prayer; and greatly does God honour prayer, because it is an expression of trust in him. But the great thing is, a perfectly resigned will, grounded upon the full conviction that good is the will of the Lord. Then we shall say,—

> "Thankful I take the cup from thee,
> Prepared and mingled by thy skill."

Then shall we feel that we have only to live for the present moment. Now may you be enabled to say, "Now in this pang, in this interval of ease, in this hour of langour, in this visitation of joy, in all, may I glorify my Lord; and by all may his will and work in me be done!" I commend you earnestly, at this distance, in prayer to the care and blessing of your heavenly Father. The earth which you are leaving is a mere vanity, as you know, without God; all that it is more, it is made by him; and in heaven God will be all in all. You will know more, love more there; be employed in a higher service; and will have this privilege,—you will escape to land before your friends, triumph before them, and see the Lord before them.

> "Thrice-blessed, bliss-inspiring hope!"

May it fully triumph over fear in you! You will not tread the wine press alone. Parents, and brothers, and friends, all of whom have an interest in God, will aid you, are aiding you by their prayers. Above all, the Lord Jehovah is your everlasting strength. God be merciful unto you, and bless you, and lift upon you the eternal light of his countenance!

This letter is beautifully characteristic of the writer's views and spirit. Having long been a subject of severe suffering, he had learned tenderly to pity the afflicted, and to mingle his prayers and tears with theirs; and being kept daily in a state of suspense in regard to the continuance of his own life, he deeply felt the value of that Divine atonement for sin, which forms the only medium of our approach to God, and which warrants the strongest confidence of a blessed immortality.

"Who gave his Son, what gift can he deny?"

It is not surprising that the letter was made a great blessing to the dying minister for whose benefit it was written. It contained sentiments to which his heart responded; he read it often, with feelings of pure and hallowed joy; he placed it in his Bible; and often said to his parent, when speaking of his spiritual state and prospects, "Father, I should like to take this letter with me to heaven."

On the 15th of May, a general meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society was held in London. A dissolution of parliament was expected speedily to take place; and it was deemed exceedingly desirable that due exertions should be made throughout the country, at the general election, to secure the return of such members as would vote for the emancipation of the negroes. The society had then been in active operation for several years, and by means of its publications, and the meetings which had been held in the principal towns in England, it had succeeded in making a strong impression upon the public mind as to the evils of West Indian slavery, and the duty of the legislature to bring the system to as speedy a termination as possible. That impression was strengthened by the fierce and determined opposition to negro instruction with which the missionaries had to contend, especially in the island of Jamaica; and by the cases of diabolical cruelty and oppression which had recently occurred, and were just published with all their afflicting details. The slave, Henry Williams, was almost flogged to death for being a Methodist and praying to God. So powerful, however, were the West Indian body in the legislature, that scarcely any member of the house of commons, except Mr. Brougham, was heard with ordinary patience and decency in favour of the injured negro, and against the continuance of a system which admitted of such atrocities. The period was therefore considered a crisis by the friends of emancipation; and an expression of the national will on that question was loudly called for at the approaching elections.

In the righteous and benevolent feelings of the abolitionists Mr. Watson strongly participated, and cheerfully lent all the assistance in his power to farther the desirable object which they all had in view. The conference of this year was held in Leeds; and during its sittings Mr. Brougham visited that town on his canvass, with a reference to his election as one of the representatives in parliament of the county of York. He was strongly recommended to that high and responsible office by the energy of his talents and the ardour of his zeal as the advocate of negro rights. Mr. Watson waited upon him at his inn, and expressed his hope that the canvass might be successful. Yorkshire had done itself the honour of repeatedly sending

to parliament Mr. Wilberforce, as the uncompromising antagonist of the African slave trade; and Mr. Watson, as an individual, felt it desirable that this great and influential county should now send to the senate the most able opponent of slavery itself. His opinion on this subject accorded with the public sentiment; and when the time of the election arrived, Mr. Brougham was returned without opposition.

In the meanwhile Mr. Watson thought that the time was come when the Methodist conference ought, more publicly and distinctly, to bear its testimony against slavery as existing in the British colonies. On this subject Mr. Wesley had declared his sentiments with an explicitness and a force of which there were few examples; and his tract against slavery, which had greatly assisted Mr. Wilberforce and his friends in their long-continued struggle with the advocates of man stealing, was as benevolent in its spirit, as it was pure in principle, and convincing in its reasonings. He characterized the trade in men as "that execrable sum of all villanies." With similar views and convictions Mr. Watson moved in the conference the following resolutions, which were adopted with perfect cordiality:—

"The conference, taking into consideration the laudable efforts which are now making to impress the public with a due sense of the injustice and inhumanity of continuing that system of slavery which exists in many of the colonies of the British crown, and to invite a general application to parliament, by petition, that such measures may, in its wisdom, be adopted as shall speedily lead to the universal termination of the wrongs inflicted upon so large a portion of our fellow men,

"*Resolve as follows:*—

"1. That, as a body of Christian ministers, they feel themselves called upon again to record their solemn judgment, that the holding of human beings in a state of slavery is in direct opposition to all the principles of natural right, and to the benign spirit of the religion of Christ.

"2. That the system of bondage existing in our West India colonies is marked with characters of peculiar severity and injustice; inasmuch as a great majority of the slaves are doomed to labours inhumanly wasting to health and life; and are exposed to arbitrary, excessive, and degrading punishments, without any effectual protection from adequate and impartially-administered laws.

"3. That the conference, having long been engaged in endeavouring the instruction and evangelization of the pagan negroes of our West India colonies, by numerous and expensive missions, supported by the pious liberality of the friends of religion at home, have had painful experience of the unfavourable influence of a state of slavery upon the moral improvement of a class of men most entitled to the sympathy and help of all true Christians; that the patient and devoted men who have laboured in the work of negro conversion have too often been made the objects of obloquy and persecution, from that very contempt or fear of the negroes which a system of slavery inspires; that the violent prejudices of caste, founded upon the colour of the skin, and nurtured by a state of slavery, and inseparable from it, have opposed the most formidable obstacles to the employment of coloured teachers and missionaries, who would otherwise have been called into useful

employment, in considerable numbers, as qualified instructers of their fellows; that the general discouragement of slave marriages, and the frequent violent separation of those husbands and wives who have been united in matrimony by missionaries, have served greatly to encourage and perpetuate a grossness of manners which might otherwise have been corrected; that the nearly absolute control of vicious masters, or their agents, over those under their power, is, to a lamentable extent, used for the corrupting of the young, and the polluting of the most hallowed relations of life; that the refusal of the Lord's day to the slave, as a day of rest and religious worship, beside fostering the habit of entire irreligion, limits, and in many cases renders nugatory, every attempt at efficient religious instruction;—all which circumstances, more or less felt in each of the colonies, demonstrate the incompatibility of slavery with a general diffusion of the influence of morals and religion, and its necessary association with general ignorance, vice, and wretchedness.

"4. That the preachers assembled in conference feel themselves the more bound to exhort the members of the Methodist societies and congregations at home, to unite with their fellow subjects in presenting their petitions to the next parliament to take this important subject into its earliest consideration, because of the interesting relation which exists between them and the numerous Methodist societies in the West Indies, in which are no fewer than 24,000 slaves, who, with their families, have been brought under the influence of Christianity, and who in so many instances have fully rewarded the charitable toil of those who have applied themselves to promote their spiritual benefit, and whose right to exemption from a state of slavery is, if possible, strengthened by their being partakers with us of 'like precious faith,' and from their standing in the special relation of '*brethren*' to all who themselves profess to be Christians.

"5. That the conference fully concur in those strong moral views of the evil and injustice of slavery which are taken by their fellow Christians of different denominations, and in the purpose which is so generally entertained of presenting petitions to parliament from their respective congregations for its speedy and universal abolition; and earnestly recommend it to all the congregations of the Wesleyan Methodists throughout Great Britain and Ireland, to express in this manner—that is, by petitions to both houses of parliament from each congregation, to be signed at its own chapel, and presented as early as possible after the assembling of the next parliament—their sympathy with an injured portion of their race, and their abhorrence of all those principles on which it is attempted to defend the subjection of human beings to hopeless and interminable slavery.

"6. That the conference still farther recommend, in the strongest manner, to such of the members of the Methodist societies as enjoy the elective franchise, that, in this great crisis, when the question is, whether justice and humanity shall triumph over oppression and cruelty, or nearly a million of our fellow men, many of whom are also our fellow Christians, shall remain excluded from the rights of humanity, and the privileges of that constitution under which they are born; they will use that solemn trust to promote the rescue of our country from the guilt and dishonour which have been brought upon it by a criminal con-

nivance at the oppressions which have so long existed in its colonies, and that, in the elections now on the eve of taking place, they will give their influence and votes only to those candidates who pledge themselves to support, in parliament, the most effectual measures for the entire abolition of slavery throughout the colonies of the British empire."

At this conference Mr. Watson was requested to write a Life of Mr. Wesley, to be published in a cheap form, and adapted to popular use. It was not intended to supersede the very able and satisfactory Life of that eminent man, published a few years before by Mr. Moore; but so to compress the principal facts of Mr. Wesley's personal history as to place them within the reach of such readers as had not time to peruse Mr. Moore's voluminous publication, or to whom the purchase of it might be inconvenient. With this request he was very reluctant to comply. He thought that he had no talent for biographical composition, having never practised himself in light and easy narrative; and that his style and manner, as well as his habits of thought, were much better adapted to controversy, and to theological disquisition. On his return to London, however, he immediately began to collect materials for this work; and as he proceeded his mind became deeply interested in its execution. The more he studied Mr. Wesley's character, the more he admired it; and he was accustomed to speak of him with strong affection and admiration. So intent was he upon the accomplishment of his design, that he often deprived himself of necessary rest, and employed a considerable part of the night in arranging his materials, and preparing the work for the press. His lamp might be seen burning in his study as late as three o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Watson was appointed a second year to the London North circuit; and his colleagues were the Rev. Messrs. Joseph Collier, William Naylor, John Bicknell, and Thomas Galland. They laboured together in harmony, and had the gratification of seeing the societies under their care "walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost." Mr. Watson took his full share of labour in the circuit, except when he was restrained by ill health; and was very attentive to all the duties of his office as a superintendent. His preaching retained an undiminished interest; and in the City-Road chapel, where his congregations, especially on the Lord's day, were always crowded, he not unfrequently adverted to prevalent errors and other evils, whether in the Church or in the world, and guarded his hearers against them. The extravagances of the modern millenarians, of the pretenders to the revival of miracles, and of the apostolic gift of tongues, occasionally called forth his animadversions; for he regarded these things as the devices of Satan, intended to divert the minds of Christians from practical holiness and righteousness, and to bring discredit upon the religion of Christ.

For many years Mr. Watson had watched the progress of Christianity, under the name of Methodism, in the United States of America, with lively interest. The Methodist Episcopal Church, founded by Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, under the sanction of Mr. Wesley, already amounted to more than half a million of souls, and considerably outnumbered every other body of religious people in the union. He admired the zeal which the American Methodists manifested in the cause

of education; as they had long supported various literary establishments of reputation. At this period they had succeeded in forming a university, under the sanction of government,* from which they had received a charter, authorizing them to confer degrees upon such persons as might be deemed entitled to those distinctions. Mr. Watson's principal works had been reprinted in America; and his character stood high, as a divine, and an eloquent writer. The attention of the parties, therefore, who were deputed to direct the concerns of the university, was naturally turned to him, as a man whose acquirements and talents would reflect honour upon that body; and they invited him to fill the chair of Professor of Belles Lettres and Moral Philosophy. To their invitation he returned the following answer. It was addressed to Dr. Emory, who had visited England in the year 1820.

London, Nov. 24th, 1830.

My Dear Sir,—Your communication from the committee of your university singularly came when I was ruminating upon American Methodism. In that I have felt increasing interest, regarding it as taking a large share in morally educating a vast and rising empire, and feeling that the present race of American preachers, and the leading friends, are deeply responsible to posterity, to the interests of which their anxieties and plans are thrown forward. I rejoice much in those plans of effective education for your youth in which you are so honourably engaged, being persuaded that if you give Methodism its full play in society, you must render it a means of supplying all the wants of your people, literary, scientific, and religious. The Lord give to your good designs his special blessing. Had *we* made provision for the educating of our youth, we had not been exposed to the mortification of seeing them alienated from us, by the world, and (what you know not in America,) the established Church, which has the attraction of worldly honour. The honour you do me, in inviting me to a chair, I duly appreciate, and feel myself very unworthy of. To belles lettres I have no pretension; moral philosophy I have studied, and think it a most important department, as the source of most misleading error, or of important truth when kept upon its true principles, both theological and philosophic. Being, however, fifty years old, and having a feeble constitution, I do not think that it would be prudent in me, were I otherwise better qualified, to encounter the fatigues of an unaccustomed duty, and a foreign climate. Brethren I know I should find, and a candour of treatment; but I can only offer my best wishes, that you may suitably and efficiently fill up so important a department. Of the state and prospects of your university, I shall, however, be very happy to learn any particulars. Be pleased to present my respectful compliments to the gentlemen of the committee, and receive my thanks personally for the kindness of your communication.

* "*Under the sanction of government.*" This remark of the biographer shows that he does not perfectly understand the nature of our civil institutions. The Wesleyan University is located in the state of Connecticut, and has been chartered by an act of the state legislature, and liberally patronized by the citizens of Middletown and others in the state; and at the last session of the legislature a donation of $15,000 was made to the institution. So far it is "under the sanction of the government," not the general government of the country, but the government of the state of Connecticut.—Am. Ed.

In accordance with the resolution of the conference, Mr. Watson felt it his duty to promote the great cause of negro emancipation, by calling upon the congregations in his circuit to present petitions to parliament for that most desirable boon. It was deemed expedient to request the attendance of the congregations at their several chapels, on a week day evening, when the subject of slavery was stated by one or more speakers, and a petition was proposed and signed. At the meeting which was held in the City-Road chapel the subject was explained and argued by Messrs. Galland and Dixon; and Mr. Watson also delivered the following address, which carried conviction to every mind. The petition was numerously signed.

In bringing the business of this evening before you, I am anxious that we should feel the firmness of the ground upon which we tread, and that we may be able to meet the objections of those who hold up to contempt, or treat with somewhat of malignant hostility, the efforts now making by humane and religious people throughout the country, to urge the emancipation of the slaves of our colonies upon the attention of parliament. If the case involved merely political considerations, this would not be the place to express our opinions; but our conference has viewed it morally and religiously; under the same aspects it is regarded by religious people generally; and a subject more worthy of conscientious consideration cannot be urged upon you; because if the slavery against which we oppose ourselves involves a great injustice, a flagrant oppression exercised toward near a million of our fellow beings, it presses upon our character and conscience as professed Christians, and it fearfully swells the amount of our national offences. I may suggest also, that I know of no people who more consistently come forward in this matter than the Wesleyan Methodists; and that both because they have laboured more abundantly than all in efforts to advance the moral improvement of the slave colonies, and have more than any others had the painful experience of the numerous obstacles to the full success of their labours which arise, and that necessarily, out of such a system of slavery. Our engagements at this hour may also be considered as peculiarly Wesleyan. We stand near the grave of a man who was one of the first to lift up his voice against West Indian bondage, and to plead the wrongs of Africa, with an eloquence which is at once touching from its pathos, and irresistible from its power.* Were that voice now living, it would give its sanction to our efforts; and in this place where that voice has been so often heard, we may feel that, "though dead," on this subject especially, "he yet speaketh."

The slave trade, so far as it consisted in the transporting of slaves from Africa for sale in our colonies, is indeed no more; but slavery and a colonial slave trade still exist. So far indeed the cause of humanity has advanced, that no one now is found to advocate the justice of man stealing on the coast of Africa, or to palliate the horrors of the middle passage. By common consent, or by silence at least, all acknowledge this branch of African oppression to be indefensible; but

* Alluding to Mr. Wesley's able and stirring tract against slavery; and the very strong views on this subject, which that eminent man was known to entertain.

there is an argument suspended from this very acknowledgment which the advocates of colonial slavery must, I think, be very dexterous, satisfactorily to dispose of. If it was wrong to steal men from Africa to reduce them to a state of bondage; it is, for the same reason, wrong to retain them in slavery. If you condemn the first thief, and the first receivers of the stolen goods, how will you justify those who, knowing them to be stolen, continue to retain them? I confess that I cannot see how the perpetuation of an injury can cause it to cease to be an injury, or by what process an acknowledged wrong can be transmuted into a right by continuing in it. My argument then is, if it was wrong to enslave the negroes, it is wrong to keep them in hopeless bondage; and it follows, that, after this country had renounced the African slave trade, it was bound, by the very principles on which that wretched traffic was repudiated, to have taken measures for the liberation of all who had thus been wickedly reduced to a state of captivity, at the earliest period at which their liberation could have been made consistent with their own interests, and long before this time to have converted them into a free, industrious, and happy peasantry. Then, indeed, should we as a nation have brought forth "fruits meet for repentance;" but the very reason why so much remains to be done by us is, that the principle of interminable bondage has been set up by the holders of slaves, and that while justice forbade us to drag any more of the inhabitants of Africa into bondage, it was perfectly just to rivet the chain upon those already dragged into this unhappy condition from generation to generation.

Now to this principle we oppose ourselves; and we contend, that the free inhabitants of Africa have not a stronger claim of justice to set up against being reduced to slavery, than the African race, originally carried to our colonies, have to be liberated from it. As to the slave trade we have indeed abstained from wrong; but as to colonial slavery we still perpetrate a wrong of the same kind, and that after we have professed to blush with shame at its recollection, and when we are endeavouring to persuade other nations to renounce it after our example. Here we and our opponents meet. We go up to parliament to urge in behalf of negroes the redress of a manifest injury; they deny that it is an injury at all.

I think it will not be difficult for us to make good our view of the question; and it will perhaps bring us more fairly into its merits, if we glance at a few of the reasons which have lately been put forth by the pro-slavery party, to prevent the people of this country from giving their signatures to anti-slavery petitions. We are first told that it is assumed without any sufficient proof that slavery is wrong in the abstract. My answer to this is, that neither party has any need to go so into the discussion of abstract cases. The simple matter at issue is, not slavery in some imaginatory form, but West India slavery; and when we have stated what it is, we may boldly ask whether that be morally right.

Let it then be observed that West India slavery, is slavery inflicted upon persons who have committed no offence, and therefore never forfeited liberty, but possess that natural right unimpaired; and it follows therefore necessarily that it would be quite as right for the black slave to reduce his master into bondage, as for the white master to hold in

it his sable bondsman. If one be right, then is the other. I will not multiply illustrations; I rest it here;—if liberty be forfeited by no crime, the right and the wrong are as much on the side of the slave as the master; and a kind of slavery, I contend, which, considered abstractedly, rests upon the principle of taking away personal liberty without forfeiture by offence, bears upon it the broad, the indelible character of a high and flagrant moral wrong. And the matter comes home to every one. If a hand we cannot resist were laid upon any of us, and we were told that we were to be slaves for life, and our children after us, should we not naturally exclaim, "What have I done?" And if no crime meriting the punishment could be alleged, should we not all exclaim against it, as a ruthless tyranny? And would it alter our moral view of the case at all, to be told that it is difficult to prove slavery in the abstract to be a moral wrong?

We are farther told, however, that the moral wrong of slavery cannot be assumed, because it was practised by the patriarchs and Jews under the Old Testament. This is a mere sophism; of which the fallacy here consists in this, that it is assumed that West Indian slavery stands upon the same ground as that mentioned in the Old Testament. Now, I shall show that they differ both circumstantially and in essence; and that this reference will not only not serve the advocates of colonial slavery, but is fatal to all their pretensions to the slightest colouring of right.

The circumstances differ. The slaves mentioned in the Old Testament were a part of the family; not left, as West Indian slaves, to be worked and abused by hirelings, while their masters were resident in a distant country. The wretched prejudice of colour and caste did not exist against them, as in our colonies,—a contemptuous feeling, from the effects of which nothing can free them, but a restoration to the rank of freemen. They were under the protection of mild and equal laws, which our slaves are not. They were not governed on a principle of fear, which our slaves are. They could demand their liberty, if treated with cruelty; but ours have no such redress. They had all the rest of the Sabbath, of which ours are deprived. They were made partakers of the religion of the patriarchs and Jews; while ours have been almost systematically and contemptuously excluded from Christianity. If they were of the Hebrew nation, they could not be held in perpetual servitude; but the negroes born in our colonies are as much of our nation as the peasants born in our counties; and yet they and their children are doomed to hopeless servitude. Husbands and wives, parents and children, were not separated. Cruelties, unheard of among the patriarchal and Hebrew masters, are daily perpetrated in our colonies. None of these ancient slaves were worked under the cartwhip, but rendered a willing service for a comfortable home and maintenance; and then, to mark the difference still more strongly, while, in all our sugar colonies, the murderous system of overworking is diminishing the population, under the milder system of ancient times the population was continually increasing,—a proof of the superiority of their condition.

Now, who, taking these circumstances into account, will be bold enough to identify the severe system of slavery, as it generally exists in our colonies, with that mentioned in the Old Testament?

But the difference between the two is essential; and this turns the argument with overwhelming force against the advocates of African bondage. We know the origin of slavery in ancient nations. It took its rise from two customs. The first was, of taking the insolvent debtor as a slave, in lieu of payment. Now, this practice cannot be objected to on the ground of injustice, because all were equally liable to it; the rich, as well as others, if they squandered away their substance; and the master upon this principle might become a slave.—Here was a principle of commutation of liberty for pecuniary obligation. The other source was war: the lives of persons taken in war were spared, on condition of becoming servants. Milder and better customs have been introduced by Christianity; but here was at least no partiality, no injustice; all were placed on equal ground. Then, as to slavery among the Jews, as far as it respected the Canaanites, they were under a Divine malediction; by virtue of a special revelation which, I suppose, our West Indians will not plead in their favour. Here, then, the ancient slavery, however objectionable it might be on civil grounds, involves, strictly speaking, no moral wrong; no injustice, no partiality; liberty was forfeited by debt, by war, or by a Divine malediction. But, let it be observed, that, during these very times, when slavery existed in these forms, the compulsory reduction of unoffending men to servitude was an acknowledged and punishable crime. It is branded as "man stealing," both in the Old and New Testaments; among the Jews it was punished with death; and under the Gospel it is ranked with the crimes which bring upon men the penalties of a future state. But this is precisely the origin of West India slavery. It was man stealing in its origin; and with this vicious origin it remains tainted to this day. It would be as hopeless a task to wash it off, as to wash the Ethiop white. Characterized as a crime against God and man, the thin gauze of sophistry cannot conceal its hateful aspect; and the attempt to find a palliation for it in the Old Testament, only makes more audible those thunders which are launched against it, as one of the most odious crimes, both in the law and in the Gospel.

But the advocates of slavery take us to the New Testament as well as to the Old. I am sure we can have no objection to follow them. Their argument is, that the apostles utter no denunciations against slavery, although in that age it was practised in most of the countries in which they preached; but rather exhorted servants to obey their masters; from which, they tell us, that we rush much too hastily to a conclusion, when we represent slavery as contrary to the spirit and to the laws of Christianity. I greatly mistake, if this argument from the New Testament will not, upon examination, sink as completely under them, as that from the Old, already examined.

Bad as the slavery was which existed among the Greeks and Romans in the apostles' time, it stood not generally upon the vicious, odious offence of "man stealing." The Greeks made a distinction in favour of those slaves who had been kidnapped by perfidy, and opened the way for them to release themselves from servitude; so that the very principle of our colonial slavery was condemned by these pagans, whose treatment of their slaves was, in other respects, severe enough. But though ancient slavery had not this criminality upon it, it is a vain

attempt to show that it was regarded with any complacency by Christianity. It is indeed surprising enough, that, with the fact before them, that Christianity has abolished slavery in all the ancient countries where it obtained predominant influence, that any persons should dream that, in its earliest periods, when it glowed with all that warmth of charity with which it burst from the fountain of the Divine compassion, it should enter into any alliance with it. To hold property in men is a thing agreeable enough to human nature, as we have proof in the present day: it flatters man's pride, it gratifies his love of power, to see his fellow creatures tremble before him, and to be the absolute lord of their life and happiness. If, then, before Christianity commenced a war upon slavery, was it ever attacked by any other system of religion, or was it ever bound upon the conscience to free a fellow man from hereditary servitude, or thought a work of religious merit to do so, to what is this to be attributed, but to the acknowledged and felt spirit of Christianity? And if to its spirit, in vain shall we look to its letter for a justification of it. The argument, however, is, that the apostles say, "Servants," (slaves,) "be obedient to your masters." But this is nothing more than our missionaries are properly enjoined to say, and is said by them, although as hostile to the whole system as we ourselves. The fact is, that deliverance could not come to the body of slaves in ancient times by the resistance of the Christianized slaves, any more than to those of our colonies; and from the operation of the justice and mercy of Christianity upon the ruling powers only could they be taught to look for it. It is enough to know that the principles of Christianity are opposed to it; and that when the rulers professed Christianity, they were then bound by its principles. Such is the case now. Ours is professedly a Christian government, and by its principles it is bound; the masters of these slaves profess Christianity, and by those principles are bound. They tell us that the apostles did not command pagan governments to loose their slaves; and they take shelter here, as though they could plead this black privilege of pagan despotism; but we hold them to their profession: they profess Christianity; and therefore they must be tried by its laws; and by one of these laws we are content that the whole question of the consonancy of Christianity with slavery shall be tried: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, so do ye also unto them."

Let it also be observed, that the apostles do no more in this case than counsel submission in a state of slavery to their converts, as submission to an evil, and an affliction; they never speak of it, like our West Indians, as a privilege, a happy state in which men ought to be content for its own sake. On the contrary, St. Paul sets freedom before the Christian slave as a good after which he ought to aspire by all lawful means: "If thou mayest be free, choose it rather." I believe this language would have conducted him to a jail in Jamaica; but it is his language; and it proves that he regarded slavery as an evil, and liberty as a good to be sought by every Christian slave.—If the apostle were a friend to slavery, why did he thus exhort the slaves? And if he thus urges them to seek their liberty, then in vain do our Scripture-quoting slaveholders plead apostolical authority.

Here, however, I find that the advocates of slavery fall into a marvellous inconsistency: they now tell us, and they have long told us, that we ought to leave it to the influence of Christianity gradually and slowly to abolish slavery in our colonies, as it did in Europe. This reason, which has been within a few days urged to induce the public to refrain from signing petitions to parliament for the abolition of slavery, gives rise, in my mind, to two inquiries.

The first is, why they should allow that Christianity ought, at any future period, to abolish slavery. They tell us that it is a very good thing; that the slaves are in a much better condition than if they were free; and that, to make them free, would only be to render those wretched who are now contented and happy. Now, if this be true, why at any future time, any more than at present, ought Christianity to deprive them of their felicity? I confess that I cannot comprehend this. If the fetter be so comfortable an ornament to the African limb, that in the name of mercy itself we are conjured not to snap it at a blow, why should it be allowed, why should they give us their full consent to deprive them of it by a slow process of filing, which may take some fifty or a hundred years to effect their liberation from it? I leave the solution of the difficulty to them; but my conclusion is, that if slavery is to be destroyed by Christianity, either to-morrow, or a century hence, then the one is inimical to the other, on their own showing, and they give up the argument which has been just refuted. They take the same ground, in fact, with us; and they too allow that there is something in slavery so inconsistent with a religion of judgment and mercy, that they cannot permanently co-exist.

But, as they may urge that Christianity, when more largely diffused among the slaves, will the better prepare them for freedom, my second inquiry is, Are they really anxious to extend the influence of Christianity among the slaves? And here, I am sorry to say, I believe not; and that this is a hollow pretence, assumed in order to paralyze our exertions. "Leave the slavery of our colonies to be terminated by the gradual influence of Christianity," say the planters; and yet what steps did they ever take to Christianize the hundreds of thousands of pagan slaves over whom they have had absolute control? Truly none; but every attempt to give religious instruction to them has come from other quarters; and, when offered, has either been treated with indifference, or resisted with contempt. They, indeed, are the men to speak of the gradual influence of Christianity upon the slaves at some future time, who will not allow the slaves its Sabbath for their worship! and who, by excessive toil, disqualify the slave from effectual attendance upon those means of instruction which might in the evenings of other days be afforded!—they who have never introduced among them, on any large scale, the sanctities of marriage, and who have never hesitated to separate parents and children, husbands and wives, by selling them to different proprietors, or different islands, and thus to break up without remorse those family connections which form the only soil on which public morals and private virtues can be planted!—they who have been contending insolently and factiously with government in order to acquire the right to pass persecuting acts, and to restrain the Christian missionary from Christianizing their slaves by the fear of fines and imprisonment; who have manifested in most instances as much rancour against

the zealous clergyman of the parish, as against the missionary who had not the same patronage; and in whose skirts are found the blood of martyred men, hated and persecuted to death, only because of their zeal to extend that very Christianity for the diffusion of which they bid us hope! Those who know the spirit with which Christianity is treated in a slave colony, know how to value all such pretences. We may, without the slightest breach of charity, brand them as hypocritical, as they are intended to mislead the public; but they can mislead none who know the parties from whom they emanate.

Toward the end of this year Mr. Watson complied with the request of the Sheffield conference, presented to him about eighteen months before, and prepared for publication his sermon on Acts xvii, 28. It was inserted in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for January and February, 1831; and was designed to be an antidote to that skeptical philosophy which attempts to exclude God from the thoughts and confidence of men, by a denial of his direct and immediate agency in the operations of nature and providence, and in the process of human salvation. This evil he lamented to see extensively prevalent in the popular literature of the age; and not only in the productions of merely literary and scientific men, but occasionally countenanced in the works of Christian divines, and even of men professing what is called evangelical religion. The sermon excited great attention at the time of its delivery; and it is forcible in argument, and rich in illustration. "We have not," says the writer, "exchanged Christianity for pagan philosophy; but we have philosophized upon it in a pagan manner; and still holding, with professed reverence, the letter of the truth, we have given to it a Gentile interpretation. This is one of the errors of the day. In the revelations of this sacred volume God is brought near to us; so near, that we are told that 'in him we live, and move, and have our being.' In much of the philosophy which wears the garb of Christianity, he is again placed 'far from us;' not so far, indeed, that he is removed quite out of sight, and wholly unacknowledged and forgotten; but so far as to weaken the foundations of our trust in his power and grace; and to chill those warm and lively emotions of the affections toward him, in which our piety has both its joy and its strength."

Such is the evil of which Mr. Watson complains, and which he labours to counteract. He adduces his illustrations from the arrangements of nature in the material creation; the administration of providence; the formation of correct religious opinion; the nature of inward religion; the revival and extension of true religion in the world.

After closing the annual accounts of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, the report of that institution for the year 1830 was published. It states that twenty-two missionaries had been sent to different stations; that the number of missionaries employed by the society was about one hundred and fifty; that the members in Church fellowship, under the care of the missionaries, amounted to forty-one thousand one hundred and eighty-six, being an increase in the course of the year of one thousand five hundred and twenty-six; and that twenty-six thousand four hundred and forty children were under instruction in the mission

schools. The income of the society was £50,017. 18*s.* 8*d.* It does not appear that any part of this report was written by Mr. Watson.

In the spring of the year 1831, a dissolution of parliament, and another general election, were anticipated; and the committee of the Anti-Slavery Society, ever alive to the object of that institution, called a public meeting at Exeter-Hall on the 23d of April, for the purpose of directing the attention of the electors of Great Britain to the degradation and wrongs still endured by the negro slave. It was probably the most numerous assembly of the friends of the society ever convened under one roof; and the interest was intense. Lord Suffield, one of the most zealous and steady advocates of emancipation, was called to the chair; and the meeting was addressed by Mr. Buxton, Sir James Mackintosh, Dr. Lushington, the Rev. Daniel Wilson, Mr O'Connell, Mr. Sheil, the Rev. John Burnett, Mr. Watson, Mr. Evans, Mr. George Stephen, and the Rev. John W. Cunningham. Mr. Watson had long cherished a lively interest in the success of this society, and was now an efficient member of its committee; but, though repeatedly desired, and though much had been expected from him, he had never addressed any of its public meetings, having been prevented by indisposition. On one occasion he had come from Bath, for the express purpose of delivering a speech, at one of the meetings of this society; but when the day arrived, he was so ill as to be unable to leave his bed. He was now suffering from affliction; his manner of speaking indicated great feebleness; and his speech was but indistinctly heard by the immense concourse of people; yet it was every way worthy of himself, and of the cause which he was wishful to promote. The following is an outline, copied from his own papers:—

My Lord,—I agree with the preceding speakers, that a new and more hopeful state of things, as to the question of emancipation, opens before us. We never had so little cause for despair; we never had so much to anticipate. I agree, too, that the manner in which ministers have spoken, and the plan they propose, show that they are in earnest. For the first time we have a ministry in earnest in regard to this cause.

But with great deference to their wisdom, deep as is my admiration of their public conduct,—happily and honourably as I think they unite the relations of ministers of the crown, and the servants of the people, in close and inseparable intimacy,—I must confess that they had pleased me better, if they had supported Mr. Buxton's motion for inquiry, in preference to saying, "We know the whole case; we need no information; and we have determined upon our plan." I do full justice to their motives of straightforward honest integrity; but in my humble judgment, if they have not mistaken their course, they have stopped far, very far short in it. We did not need inquiry to ascertain whether slavery is an evil or not; nor an inquiry the object of which should be palliation and delay; but precisely in the terms of Mr. Buxton's motion, "to ascertain and adopt the best means of effecting its abolition;" and that at the earliest period.

Now to me it appears that to this abolition ministers bound themselves by their very admission that slavery is an enormous evil. If it be so, then we are bound to get disentangled from it as speedily as

possible; and in order to do this, information ought to have been courted from all quarters. I think parliament itself was bound to this. Parliament has declared slavery to be an evil not to be tolerated beyond the necessity of the case; but that it is necessary to continue it any longer, has been always assumed, never proved. Years too have elapsed since that declaration was made; and whether the necessity ever existed, or that it still exists, was surely a question of so much importance, as to take the precedence of all plans of mitigation; and this question can only be fully determined by the evidence of facts, and the testimony of practical and disinterested men.

The circumstances, too, with which the question of abolition stands surrounded appear to me strongly to enforce a full and honest inquiry. I mention one. This is the difference of opinion which now more strongly than ever exists, in consequence of investigating the subject, as to the limit of time beyond which this wretched system ought not to be suffered to extend. There are indeed men who, like an honourable member in the last debate, think that preparatory measures must range through two or three hundred years before freedom can be conceded. Ministers prescribe no limit. They will go on, hoping to see the end some time; and I believe honestly desiring to see it sooner than they expect. But there are great numbers of thinking men who as firmly believe that the limit might be fixed at the boundary of the small space of two, three, or at most five years. We all know too, that this opinion grows with examination; and it does appear to be most desirable that an inquiry should have been instituted on this point. We are anxious to know something concerning it. Our hearts cry out, *How long?* and we indulge the joyful anticipation that the sound of their jubilee shall soon strike upon our ears. Or are we doomed to look through a long vista of time, in almost endless perspective, upon that dark scene of suffering innocence and guilty tyranny which our western colonies present? Suffering *innocence*, I say; for these slaves suffer without crime; and guilty *tyranny*, for their oppressors wield their rod of iron without *right*.

For these and many other reasons the friends of abolition, although they meet this day with quickened hopes, would have been much more satisfied had that ministry on which notwithstanding we place great confidence supported an inquiry which I am satisfied would have resulted in impressing better views of the practicability of the measure of emancipation, and would also, on the subject of interest, have worked a deeper conviction in the country, that *sin* is as unprofitable as it is mischievous; and given force to that great maxim, that what is morally wrong can never be politically right.

But now for the plan upon which ministers propose to deal with slavery. As far as it goes, it has my humble approval. It sins, however, by defect; and unless that defect be supplied, it will disappoint both them and us. The plan is founded upon Mr. Canning's resolutions, and the orders in council to which they gave rise. Those resolutions do honour to the name of an illustrious statesman, who, however, after they were passed, seemed to stand aghast at his own virtue, and to be perplexed at the forward movement he had made. His mind seized with ardour the beautiful abstraction of justice it had created; but it faltered when the call was made to substantiate it into

reality. He formed his statue of clay; but he was not bold enough to bring the fire from heaven to warm it into life and energy. But subsequent statesmen have found fault with these famous resolutions; and it may explain the lukewarmness with which they have been acted upon, that an ex-minister has declared them to be hampering and embarrassing. But these resolutions and orders in council all proceeded upon the principle that they were to be mainly carried into effect by the interested parties themselves; and upon a total forgetfulness of the state of West Indian society. There the love of slavery is a passion, not as profitable merely; but it is loved for the absolute power which it gives to man over man. It is loved by him who uses this power ill, because it gratifies his brutality; and it is loved by him who uses it well, because he compliments himself the more upon his virtue. It is loved, too, generally, for the facilities which it gives to the sensual vices. It is fed, too, by the habit which still prevails of regarding the negro not as a man, but an inferior being; or, if a man, a man under the curse of Heaven, under the ban of the Almighty, with Cain's mark and Ham's malediction unobliterated and unrepealed. It is fed, finally, by the almost irresistible sway of caste,—an association founded upon the colour of the skin, and strengthened by the bondage of ages; an association so powerful, that he must be almost an angel, not a man, who can live there and escape it; an association which, when it brings the various shades of colour before the moral judgment of the white, produces much the same effect as a prism applied to the eye. All questions of truth and justice enter the mind dressed in hues and colours, and dazzle and mislead, when they ought to guide and direct.

Now, I ask, whether this is a state of society on which you can depend for honest co-operation to carry your preparatory plans into effect. Lord Althorp says, the negroes are not in a state fit for freedom; and, in order to fit them for the boon, he finds his preparing and improving agents in the masters, their attorneys, and managers. But if the slave is not fit for freedom, are these the agents to produce that fitness? If the slave needs a course of moral discipline, are these the professors and doctors of purity and virtue, under whose tuition he is to be placed? I fear we must look to two long courses of preparation, —the preparation of the master before he is fitted to carry all these arrangements into effect; and then the preparation of the slave; and so the object is thrown to an interminable distance.

For where are your ameliorating, your disciplining agents? Where is this agency through which the plans of government must act? Lord Howick finds fault with the Jamaica house of assembly, the attorney general, and the council of protection; and if we go to magistrates, many of them commit crimes against the negro themselves; and all the rest join to palliate or even applaud their conduct. But if you could command the services of all these; what then? Could you carry your plans into effect against public will and public feeling? Take, for instance, the evidence of slaves in your courts. Terror here often obstructs the course of justice; and where the slave is under the terror of the whip, and a thousand oppressions which no law can reach, you give the privilege in vain.

Legislate as you may, unless a period be fixed beyond which slavery

shall not exist, little or nothing can be effected. Whatever the legislation of this country may do in the way of amelioration, if it come through the agency of the colonists, it will be vain, and may be pernicious; like the pure dew of heaven that descends upon the manchineel tree, which is converted into poison, and blackens and cauterizes all who flee to it for shelter, and excoriates the lips of those who taste of its fruit. I have hope, however, from the ministers; especially when they shall be better supported by the expression of public opinion. Long may they possess their seats, if they will but apply themselves honestly to this subject; but if they do not, the sooner they fall the better.

But it may be said, "You forget that part of the plan which relates to the Christianizing of the slaves." If I understand the plan aright, it is, that Christianity is to be applied in order to keep the slaves passive and content, for a long and indefinite period, after which they are to be set free. But no idea seems to be entertained, that it is not possible effectually to spread Christianity through the mass of the negro population, taking in the field negroes, because of the obstructions which a state of slavery will always present. Your laws may give them Sabbaths; but, in fact, they will be robbed of them, and you cannot prevent it. You may say they shall have free access to places of worship; but there is a power on every plantation greater than that of the British government itself. You may multiply ministers, but as to the field slaves, not one of these teachers can go upon a plantation without permission, nor the negroes to him; and whether he be a clergyman or a missionary, the more serious and earnest he is, the more he would be opposed; and that for reasons which we could tell, were it proper to disclose them in this assembly.

But could you thus diffuse the influence of Christianity, you would not promote patience under a bondage which has no limit of time. You would make them better *servants*, but worse *slaves*. You would create honesty, conscience, feeling. These are all the creations of Christianity; but with them you would create the love of freedom. Is it forgotten in all these speculations, that the very Christianity you would teach addresses every Christian, "If thou mayest be made free, use it rather?" and I hold it to be the grossest libel upon it, to suppose it to be a fit instrument which a slave holder, or an oppressor of any kind, may employ for his interests and his passions. Its rights are equal; its duties are reciprocal; it is justice, mercy, truth, purity; wherever it comes it breathes a free, though a peaceful spirit. It is not a religion to teach slaves to kiss their chain; but a religion to teach freemen how to use their freedom. By Christianity the mind becomes enlightened, and the social relations become more united and strong. Will a Christian father, then, endure it as well as a pagan father, that his children shall be separated from him? that his daughters, whom he has educated in piety and virtue, shall be subdued for pollution by the whip?—a thing most general throughout the slave colonies. Is it possible that Christianity should teach a man to tolerate that? There is no libel upon Christianity so gross, as that it should be made the instrument of defending such an outrage.

To the great end, therefore, of placing a limit to slavery, and to urge inquiry upon parliament, in order to fix that limit as soon as practica-

ble, our efforts are now, as it appears to me, to be directed. And our hopes brighten. We have hope from a free press in Jamaica. The secrets of that prison house will not be kept. We have hope from the noble spirit of the free people of colour, who are ready to go with you into your plans of emancipation; a fact which of itself refutes a thousand objections drawn from the safety and interests of planters. They are planters, and yet are nobly willing to let the oppressed go free. We have hope from the approaching election; for if all who possess the right of voting follow the honourable example of the Friends, and give their suffrages to none but those that will pledge themselves to the cause, the number of our friends in parliament will be increased; and if that right should ultimately be extended, it will comprehend so many friends of abolition, that they will be irresistible.

We have hope from the throne. It beams with a mild radiance upon the British isles; and we wish it also to diffuse its beams upon the negro race. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." Pitiless has been the pelting of that storm which has long fallen upon the negro race; but the clouds are beginning to break, and a burst of mild and cheering splendour will follow. We trust it will be the honour of our sovereign, above that of all his predecessors, that not the sigh of a slave shall pollute the air of a single country over which he extends his sceptre.

And defective as is the present plan of ministers, we have hope from them. Long may they fill their exalted places, if they only fulfil this high office. The administrations which have trimmed on this great question have tumbled down in succession; and I may speak as a fool, but I think none will stand that trifles with it. The cry of this oppressed race is gone up to heaven; and God has come down to deliver them. If the audible thunders of Egypt are not heard against the task masters, yet the no less effectual thunder of the indignation of a free and freedom-loving people shall roll from year to year, till tyranny unlooses its grasp, and avarice its gripe, and both cry, "Let the oppressed go free."

It remains for us to do our duty. Near eight hundred thousand human beings look to us, and among the rest one hundred thousand Christians, worshipping the same God. Shall these be denied their Sabbaths? Shall these be flogged for conscience' sake? Shall these, after they have trained up their female children in virtue, see them polluted by the owner or his manager by force? Shall these husbands and wives be separated? Shall the whip be employed, not to cut the flesh only, but to sever the marriage tie? Will you abandon the cause? No; you will persevere till you wipe off this odious stain; till you achieve a triumph of your religion and your humanity, which, in spite of the contempt now poured upon the race, the negro historians of those beautiful isles will record, and negro poets sing, to your honour, and, above all, to the praise of God.*

* As editor merely, we do not hold ourselves responsible for all the sentiments contained in this address. They belonged to the life of Mr. Watson, and it was therefore right that they should be incorporated in his biography, as forming an important item in his career of usefulness, and a principle which he exemplified

The sentiments contained in this able and impressive address were not assumed by Mr. Watson for the occasion; nor were they uttered merely for the sake of effect. They were the deep and solemn convictions of his conscience. His thorough knowledge of West Indian society, the result of a long-continued correspondence and intercourse with the missionaries and other persons, had convinced him that every attempt to convert the negro population throughout the West Indies must fail, unless the people could be delivered from that state of bondage under which they groaned. He could have related many a secret of that prison house, and have given most revolting details, not only of extreme physical suffering, but of moral pollution, the direct consequence of that absolute power which the slaveholder possessed over the hapless creatures who were denominated his "property." The system of West Indian slavery in many respects presented itself in an attitude of direct hostility to Christianity; and the question was, which of them should predominate. The owner of men, women, and children, often claimed the right to interpose between them and their Maker and Redeemer; and denied them all access to the means of salvation. The unmarried negroes were sometimes avowedly denied the blessings of religious instruction and public worship, lest moral principles should be planted in their minds, and these should interfere with the increase of population, which the master claimed as his right. The shameless violation of God's command, and the degradation of their moral nature, were encouraged for the sake of gain. Indifference to evils of this kind would have been a crime; and every sentiment of justice, benevolence, religion, and patriotism, urged Mr. Watson forward in the use of all constitutional means to obtain their removal. At this time he formed the design of publishing an address to the Methodist connection on the subject, with reference to the exercise of the elective franchise; but he was induced to alter his purpose in consequence of the course adopted by the Anti-Slavery Society. At the general meeting of this institution, on the 23d of April, an "Address to the People of Great Britain and Ireland" was agreed upon, calling upon the electors,

in practical life. In justice therefore to him, this address, evincing so much of patriotism and Christian philanthropy, could not be suppressed.

It should be remarked, however, that the principles of emancipation for which Mr. Watson pleads, are quite at variance with those contended for by *our* abolitionists. In his letter to Mr. Buxton, M. P., he says, "I am no advocate for immediate emancipation in the strict sense; and have always thought that fixing a not distant time for the extinction of slavery, would, of necessity, bring the planters themselves into preparatory measures, with zeal and sincerity, not excluding religious instruction." Though he wished the British parliament to move forward to the work without delay, it was that laws might be *immediately* passed for the *gradual* emancipation of the West Indian slaves; and this is what was finally accomplished by the bill which provides for the freedom of the colonial slaves; the law allowing a suitable time and a gradual process for their entire freedom. But our emancipators contend for the *immediate* and *unconditional* abolition of slavery, in all its parts, as a duty enjoined by Christianity. Now we say the thing is impracticable consistently with the welfare of the master or slave, because it would expose both to more suffering and misery than slavery itself even now inflicts. Whenever a plan can be devised for the safe emancipation of the slaves, with a fair prospect of bettering their condition, let it be done; but till then, it is but trifling with the evil, to be vapouring on the abstract evils of slavery, and of the duty of immediate emancipation. So far, and no farther, do our views quadrate with those of Mr. Watson.—Am. Ed.

in returning members to parliament, to remember the enslaved negroes, and to support such candidates only as would vote for emancipation. To this document, which was stitched up with the principal monthly periodicals, and extensively circulated by other means, Mr. Watson affixed his name, in honourable connection with the signatures of Messrs. Buxton, S. Gurney, Wilberforce, William Smith, Macaulay, Clarkson, Dr. Lushington, and the Rev. Daniel Wilson.

The following is the document which Mr. Watson had prepared for publication on his own responsibility:—

THE ENSUING ELECTION.

ADDRESS TO THE WESLEYAN METHODISTS, BY R. WATSON.

YOUR views on the present aspect of political affairs, like those of your fellow subjects, are probably very various; but as almost every congregation connected with the religions to which we belong has sent up petitions to parliament, numerously signed, in favour of the abolition of negro slavery, you have shown to the world that on this great national offence you have but one opinion, and that you view with a just indignation the continuance of a system of oppression, equally condemned and repudiated by religion and humanity.

I address you, not to impress you with just views and conscientious convictions on this heart-rending and heart-stirring subject; but to caution you against those soft and delusive representations with which you may be assailed, and those general and unmeaning professions of aversion to slavery on the part of the candidates by whom your votes at the approaching elections may be solicited, and by which you and the great cause may be betrayed.

The parliament is dissolved; and the king has made an appeal to his people on a measure which he and his ministers deem essential to the public welfare; and your vote and interest must assist in determining this question. But important as that is, and connected with great results, it is only indirectly a question of morality and religion; it relates chiefly to the management of public affairs, with which, as creatures passing into eternity, we have only a temporary concern. But there is a question at issue, which, to every Christian man, bears a higher character, and presents itself under more solemn considerations. The weight of a great national sin is upon us, which, if not removed, must render all measures for promoting the national prosperity nugatory; which will track every step of our policy with its cries to heaven for retribution; and, according to the established principles on which a just God governs the nations of the earth, will not cease to perplex our councils, render our "diviners mad," and frustrate our best hopes, till it is repented of, and put away. We hold near EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND *of our fellow men, who have never committed a crime by which their freedom might be justly forfeited, under an opprersive, a debasing, a relentless, and a murderous bondage.*

Fellow Christians! followers of that eminent man who was one of the first writers in this country to bear his strong and indignant testimony against this outrage upon humanity and religion, you must either act worthy of such a leader by conscientiously refusing your votes to any pro-slavery candidate who proposes to represent you in

parliament, or be partakers of this frightful guilt,—a guilt which, at the present moment, is the more incapable of palliation, because the case of these oppressed slaves is better known to you than formerly; and because a noble band of men have taken up their cause in parliament, and only wait to be reinforced by an increased number of co-adjutors, to complete the glorious measure of abolishing the slave trade, by the still more glorious achievement of abolishing slavery. Every vote we give has at such a juncture the greatest weight, and ought to be felt by us as a trust, the more sacred, and for which we must give stricter account.

You will indeed be told that the British parliament has already pledged itself to a gradual abolition of slavery. To this you may reply, by asking why we should gradually cease to sin, where sin is in fact acknowledged. Necessity, it is true, is pleaded; but necessity arising from what? If the interest of the slave forms the ground of the necessity, then is the plea good; if that of the owner, it only aggravates the offence. But that any necessity exists for postponing measures of speedy emancipation, has been assumed, and never proved; and parliament has hitherto refused to grant those inquiries by which alone the question of the time at which emancipation might be granted with prudence can be determined. To an honest inquiry as to the speediest practicable mode of terminating this evil must your representations of your principles urge the new parliament. The legislature did indeed pledge itself to extinguish slavery; but then this was to be effected through a process of preparatory measures, left to be carried into effect by the planters; that is, the interested, the prejudiced, the oppressing parties themselves! Can this poor plea satisfy your conscientious convictions? Look at the fact. Eight years have elapsed since this boasted pledge was given; and what is still the scene presented by the colonies? Not a slave has been liberated under this preparatory process; not a lash less inflicted upon the flesh of our colonial bondsmen. Their Sabbaths are withheld, their immortal spirits doomed to ignorance and vice, their caste and colour as much hated; they are still goods and chattels; the ties of nature are still outraged; husbands and wives, parents and children, are still separated for ever from each other, by the sales of their persons; and the oppression which the iron hand of avarice and pride inflicts is still as heavy and wasting as ever. It may indeed be urged, that the present ministry have taken up these languishing plans, and pledge themselves to carry them into effect with greater zeal; and their sincerity in this ought to be gratefully acknowledged. Indeed the manner in which several of them have spoken on the subject of slavery in the house of commons is so different from the heartless tone of most of their predecessors in office, that it warms hope, for the first time, into something like a vigorous, living anticipation: but the mode they propose to enforce the orders in council already issued was resisted by the West Indian interest, in the recent debate on Mr. Buxton's motion, and itself is not likely to be carried in parliament without a greater accession of strength there; and even if adopted by the legislature, it holds out no certain prospect of the abolition of slavery. It has the great fault of former half measures; a fault which counteracts its own efficiency. It leaves its execution in the hands of the owners of slaves themselves; of men who, generally

speaking, love slavery, not merely for the gain it brings, but for the haughty power which it confers. For in the West Indies the love of slavery is little less than a ruling passion. With a plan, therefore, so defective as to be without an executive principle, you cannot be satisfied, if you think at all seriously upon the case; and you will feel that until parliament determines that beyond some given period slavery shall not exist, no hearty co-operation can be expected from the colonial legislatures, magistrates, and proprietors, to adopt those measures which shall render the transition from the servile condition of the negroes, to that of free labourers, at once speedy, and safe to society.

But you will be told that Christianity is in progress among them; and till that has prepared them for freedom, it is in vain to expect that their condition can be safely exchanged for that of freedom. Of the triumphs of Christianity in those wretched regions you may indeed well speak with exultation. Notwithstanding all the counteractions which a state of bondage, and the immoral character of the colonies, present,—notwithstanding the denial of Sabbaths, the exhaustion of the spirits, and occupation of the time by labour,—notwithstanding the attempts to lord it over the souls as well as the bodies of the slaves, the persecution and the contempt which your missionaries have endured, and the vices which have often been forced, by the whip and the various machinations of a polluting tyranny, upon those who were giving signs of reformation,—Christianity, through your zeal and liberality, has exerted an omnipotence which, in a great number of instances, has produced results the most gratifying to humanity and piety, and scattered a seed which more favourable circumstances will ripen into a luxuriant harvest. But you will not fail to ask how much more extensively and efficiently this religion of mercy and purity would have been diffused in those colonies, had slavery long since been abolished, and all the resistances and obstacles which it necessarily presents to religion and morals, and the free enjoyment of religious liberty, been taken out of the way.

The year 1831 was rendered a period of considerable interest to the Wesleyan congregations, by the publication of a supplement to the hymn book in general use among them. That hymn book was published by Mr. Wesley in the year 1780; yet even then he did not consider it as fully calculated to meet the wants of the connection.—He continued, in all the London chapels, on the forenoon of the Sabbath, the use of a "Collection of Psalms and Hymns;" he still used small selections of hymns at all the great festivals of the Church; and he also compiled two pocket hymn books, consisting mostly of hymns on the deep things of God, and designed to assist in private and domestic devotion. It had long been deemed desirable that the best of the festival hymns should be comprised in the hymn book generally in use; and that it should also contain a greater number of hymns adapted to public worship, to sacramental occasions, to the ordination of ministers, and to missionary anniversaries and prayer meetings.—The conference had, therefore, some years before, appointed a committee, to whom the task of furnishing such a compilation was confided; and during the early part of this year the long-expected supplement made its appearance. It has been well received; and has given

a most agreeable and edifying variety to the public worship of the connection. Most of the hymns in this supplement were selected by Mr. Watson, whose knowledge of that species of sacred literature was very extensive, and whose taste was admirable. He had an exquisite perception of the beauties of good hymns, especially those of Mr. Charles Wesley; and no man ever recited them with greater propriety and more happy effect.

The anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in the year 1831 was held, as usual, at the latter end of April and the beginning of May. Mr. Watson preached on the occasion in the City-Road chapel on the Sunday evening, May 1st; but he took no part in the public meeting on the following day at Exeter-Hall. The exertion requisite in the delivery of a speech before the immense concourse of people assembled in that spacious building was greater than he was prepared to put forth in his enfeebled state; and the attendance of so many well-qualified speakers he thought rendered his services unnecessary.

On the first of June his "Life of the Rev. John Wesley" was published in a handsome duodecimo volume, with a beautiful portrait, engraved by Dean, from the picture of Mr. Jackson. It was not merely a condensed view of the principal events of that great man's life, deduced from the works of his former biographers; but contained a large portion of original matter. Mr. Watson obtained a manuscript copy of the minutes of the early conferences, corrected by Mr. Wesley, from which he inserted some curious and valuable extracts, which show that, almost immediately after the commencement of his itinerant ministry, and the employment of preachers who had not received episcopal ordination, he adopted those principles of Church government and order which he exemplified through the remainder of his life; and that his brother Charles, who was afterward so greatly frightened at what he called a lay ministry, then concurred with him in opinion. As early as the year 1744 they contemplated the establishment of a seminary or college for the training up of men for the ministerial office; and were only induced by circumstances to delay that important measure.

The influence of Mr. Wesley's labours and plans upon public morals and happiness, and the conduct which he pursued in reference to the established Church, are largely and ably discussed in this volume; and the charges of inconsistency, of schism, and of other evils, so often urged against him, are effectually repelled; while due respect is shown to the national Church, for which Mr. Watson cherished a sincere regard. Like Mr. Wesley, he was no theoretic dissenter, but was friendly to the principle of a religious establishment. The peculiarities of Methodism, and the treatment which its adherents have received, are occasionally described by Mr. Watson with the happiest effect.

"It is nothing new," says he, "for the Methodists to endure reproach, and to be subject to misrepresentation. Perhaps something of an exclusive spirit may have grown up among us in consequence; but, if so, it has this palliation, that we are quite as expansive as the circumstances in which we have been placed could lead any reasonable man to anticipate. It might almost be said of us, 'Lo, the people

shall dwell alone.' The high Churchman has persecuted us because we are separatists; the high dissenter has often looked upon us with hostility, because we could not see that an establishment necessarily, and *in se*, involved a sin against the supremacy of Christ; the rigid Calvinist has disliked us, because we hold the redemption of all men; the Pelagianized Arminian, because we contend for salvation by grace; the Antinomian, because we insist upon the perpetual obligation of the moral law; the moralist, because we exalt faith; the disaffected, because we hold that loyalty and religion are inseparable; the political Tory, because he cannot think that separatists from the Church can be loyal to the throne; the philosopher, because he deems us fanatics; while semi-infidel liberals generally exclude us from all share in their liberality, except it be in their liberality of abuse. In the meantime we have occasionally been favoured with a smile, though somewhat of a *condescending* one, from the lofty Churchman; and often with a fraternal embrace from pious and liberal dissenters; and if we act upon the principles left us by our great founder, we shall make a meek and lowly temper an essential part of our religion; and, after his example, move onward in the path of doing good, 'through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report,' remembering that one fundamental principle of Wesleyan Methodism is ANTI-SECTARIANISM AND A CATHOLIC SPIRIT."

The following description of Mr. Wesley in old age, and of the treatment which he still meets with from mere men of letters, and from evangelical Churchmen, is equally just and striking:—"When Mr. Wesley was in his eighty-fifth year, the labours and journeys of almost every day are noticed" in his journal, "exhibiting at once a singular instance of natural strength, sustained doubtless by the special blessing of God, and of an entire consecration of time to the service of mankind, of which no similar example is probably on record; and which is rendered still more wonderful by the consideration that it had been continued for more than half a century, on the same scale of exertion, and almost without intermission. The vigour of his mind at this age is also as remarkable; the same power of acute observation as formerly is manifested; the same taste for reading and criticism; the same facility in literary composition. Nor is the buoyant cheerfulness of his spirit a less striking feature. Nothing of the old man of unrenewed nature appears; no forebodings of evil; no querulous comparisons of the present with the past. There is the same delight in the beautiful scenes of nature; the same enjoyment of conversation, provided it had the two qualities of usefulness and brevity; the same joy in hopeful appearances of good; and the same tact at turning the edge of little discomforts and disappointments by the power of an undisturbed equanimity. Above all, we see the man of *one business*, living only to serve God and his generation, 'instant in season and out of season,' seriously intent, not upon doing so much duty, but upon saving souls; and preaching, conversing, and writing for this end alone. And yet this is the man whom we still sometimes see made the object of the sneers of infidel or semi-infidel philosophers; and whom book makers, when they have turned the interesting points of his character and history into a *marketable* commodity, endeavour to dress up in the garb of a fanatic, or a dreamer, by way of rendering their works more accept-

able to frivolous readers,—the man to whose labours few even of the evangelical clergy of the national Church have the heart or the courage to do justice; forgetting how much that improved state of piety which exists in the establishment is owing to the indirect influence of his long life of labour, and his successful ministry; and that even very many of themselves have sprung from families where Methodism first lighted the lamp of religious knowledge, and produced a religious influence. It will indeed provoke a smile, to observe what effort often discovers itself in writers of this party, when referring to the religious state of the nation in the last and present century, to keep this apostolic man wholly out of sight, as though he had never existed; feeling, we suppose, that because he did not conform to the order of their Church, in all particulars, it would be a sin against their own orthodoxy even to name him as one of those great instruments in the hands of God, who, in mercy to these lands, were raised up to effect that vast moral and religious change, the benefits of which they themselves so richly enjoy. This may be attributed not only to that exclusive spirit which marks so many of the clergy of this class, even beyond others, notwithstanding their piety and general excellence, but to the Calvinism which many of them have imbibed. The evangelical Arminianism of Wesley has been forgiven by the orthodox dissenters; but, by a curious anomaly, not by the Calvinistic party of the Church. It is probably better understood by the former."

As soon as the Life of Mr. Wesley was published, the Wesleyan book committee in London requested Mr. Watson to compile a Biblical and Theological Dictionary, for the use of the connection. With this request he readily complied, for a reason with which at that time they were not acquainted. For some years it had been his intention to publish such a work, and, in the event of his decease, to apply the profits which might arise from the sale to the benefit of his own family; and with this view the collections and memoranda which he had made were copious and valuable. He therefore began immediately to arrange his materials, and was ready in the course of a few weeks to put the early part of the work into the hands of the printer. It was published in separate parts, the first of which appeared at the beginning of October, and fully justified the expectations which had been formed concerning it. When the publication was somewhat advanced, and the demand for it was urgent and extensive, he was requested to accept some remuneration for his services, especially as his original intentions as to pecuniary advantage were then discovered; but this he peremptorily refused; and when the proposal was repeated, and urged upon him, he declared that unless he might be allowed to finish the work gratuitously, for the benefit of the Wesleyan body, he would decline all future connection with the publication, and the committee might complete it as they pleased. At that time he cherished the design, if his life should be prolonged, of writing some other work for the benefit of his widow and children, should he be removed from them.

The conference of 1831 was held in Bristol; and the manner in which Mr. Watson had executed the task imposed upon him twelve months before, of writing a Life of Mr. Wesley, had given such satisfaction to his brethren, that they unanimously adopted the following resolution:—"The cordial thanks of the conference are given to the Rev. Richard

Watson for the very able and satisfactory manner in which he has fulfilled the request of the last conference, in compiling a concise Life of Mr. Wesley, adapted to general circulation, and for his generous gift of the copyright to the book room; and he is requested to enlarge that work, so that it may become the standard and authorized life of our venerable founder."

His literary engagements did not divert his attention from the wrongs and oppression endured by the slaves in the West Indies; nor did the lapse of time abate his desire to see some effectual measure adopted with reference to their speedy emancipation. He moved the following resolution in the conference, in which there was a perfect unanimity of sentiment on this great question:—"Convinced that negro slavery is one of the foulest of our national sins, and ought, on grounds strictly religious, to be strenuously opposed by all who fear God, the conference earnestly recommends to all our members and friends who now are, or hereafter shall be, possessed of the elective franchise, to pay a conscientious and paramount regard, in every future exercise of that franchise, to the slave question; and to support such candidates only as shall, in connection with other qualifications for a seat in the senate of a country professing Christianity, decidedly pledge themselves in favour of a speedy and effectual legislative enactment for the extinction of this most unchristian system."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Appearance of the Cholera in England—Fast Day observed by the City-Road Congregation—Watch-Night at the City-Road—Letter to Mr. Edmondson—Report of the Missionary Society for 1831—Persecutions in Jamaica—Mr. Watson visits Brighton for his Health—Completion of his Biblical Dictionary—Doctrine of Christian Perfection—Missionary Anniversary in 1832—Mr. Watson's Speech—Literary Projects—Mr. Watson begins an Exposition of the New Testament—The Conference of 1832—Letter to Mrs. Watson—Mr. Watson presents his Works to the Methodist Connection—His Appointment to the Office of Resident Secretary to the Missions—Dr. Adam Clarke—Mr. Watson's resignation of his Pastorship at City-Road.

During the autumn of this year the people of England were under great alarm and terror because of the near approach of the Asiatic cholera; a disease which was said to have originated some years before in the East Indies, and to have already carried off no less than fifty millions of the human race. After extending its ravages through Hindostan, Persia, Turkey, and Russia, it had appeared in Poland and Germany, and was making near approaches to the British islands. At length it broke out in Hamburgh; and soon after in Sunderland and Shields; and its extension through the land was generally anticipated. Medical men resorted to Sunderland in considerable numbers; some by the order of government, and others, to ascertain the nature of the disease, and determine upon its treatment when it should appear in their respective neighbourhoods. The public alarm was greatly increased by the details which were given in the periodical journals, and by the fact that the disease bade defiance to all that science, professional skill, and humanity could devise to arrest its progress. This

"pestilence" emphatically "walked in darkness;" the principle of its movements could not be ascertained; and no effectual specific could be discovered for the relief of the sufferers. It withered all the strength of man in a few hours; and in some instances individuals were pursuing the business of life in the morning, in their usual health, and at night were consigned to the tomb.

The mystery connected with the cholera seemed particularly to mark it out as a special visitation of the Almighty; and in this light Mr. Watson viewed the subject. His spirit bowed before the Lord; and he spoke of the disease with great reverence and humility. When it first broke out in the north of England, it was agreed that a day of fasting and humiliation should be appointed for the congregation and society connected with the City-Road chapel; and on that occasion three public prayer meetings were held in the morning chapel; one at eight o'clock, another at twelve, and the third at seven in the evening. At twelve o'clock the chapel was filled at the commencement of the service. After the congregation had sung an appropriate hymn, Mr. Watson said, "I am sorry to inform you that the news from the north, received to-day, is unfavourable. Five more cases of cholera have occurred; and three of them have been fatal. I will read to you, as appropriate to this solemn occasion, the twenty-fourth chapter of the second book of Samuel; and afterward we will unite in prayer to God." He then read, with great solemnity and impressiveness, the proposal made to David, when the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, whether he would choose, as the national punishment, seven years of famine, or to flee three months before a conquering army, or that the land should be visited by three days of pestilence.—"And David said unto Gad," by whom the fearful message was delivered, "I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hands of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hands of man. So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men."

After reading this chapter, Mr. Watson engaged in prayer, in which he expressed himself with uncommon power and enlargement, and continued for about half an hour. He acknowledged the great mercy which God had long shown to this land, and the consequent obligations of the people to serve and glorify him; and then confessed, with minuteness and particularity, and with every expression of humiliation and shame, the sins of individuals, of the Church, and of the nation.—The open and blasphemous attacks made by infidelity upon the truth of God, and on account of which Christians had not sufficiently grieved and wept; the murderous cruelty and injustice with which the slaves in the colonies had for ages been treated, while the nation had generally been indifferent to their tears, and the cry of their blood; the scoffs at serious godliness which were often uttered in the senate; the profanation of the Sabbath, by cabinet councils and political feasting; the spirit of party violence, by which the nation was divided; the want of zeal and unity among professing Christians; and the open and general neglect of personal religion among all classes of the community; were some of the evils which he confessed to God, with all their aggravations, and deeply lamented. He acknowledged the just liability of the

nation to the severest inflictions of almighty wrath, and earnestly pleaded with God, that mercy might yet spare a guilty people. The victims that might fall by the scourge he besought the Lord, by his grace, to prepare for their great change, and appearance before the Divine tribunal; and he besought "the God of all grace," in honour of his Son, and in the exercise of his sovereign compassion, to sanctify the judgments of his rod by a general and copious effusion of the Holy Spirit, so that the people might every where return unto him with penitential sorrow and praying faith. The hymns which he selected and the congregation sung, during the subsequent part of the meeting, were highly appropriate; and the entire service was such as can scarcely ever be forgotten by those who engaged in it. The people seemed to resign themselves absolutely into the hands of their Saviour, prepared either to live or die, as he might determine. The following verse was sung with intense feeling:—

"Jesus, to thee we fly
From the devouring sword;
Our city of defence is nigh;
Our help is in the Lord.
Or, if the scourge o'erflow,
And laugh at innocence,
Thine everlasting arms, we know,
Shall be our souls' defence."

When the disease broke out in London, Mr. Watson preached in the City-Road chapel, on Amos iii, 6: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" and endeavoured to impress the congregation, and especially the pious part of them, with a conviction that all calamities are under the immediate control and direction of the Lord, who has engaged that all things shall work together for good to them that love him. Under whatever circumstances, and at whatever time, believers in Jesus may be called away, death to them is gain; and every event connected with it is arranged by infinite wisdom and love. A weekly prayer meeting was immediately instituted, with a special reference to this providential visitation, which was held in the morning chapel of City-Road every Friday, at twelve o'clock. Mr. Watson's attendance upon this service was regular; and here he generally met a considerable number of devout people, like-minded with himself, who were accustomed to leave their families and business, and unite in earnest prayer to the Father of mercies, in behalf of a suffering and sinful people. His convictions of the prevalence of prayer were very strong, and in full accordance with the language of Scripture; for on this subject his mind was unwarped by the theories of a semi-infidel philosophy. He was too well acquainted with the Gospel of Christ, to doubt that the prayer of every believing suppliant has power with God; and the manner in which he often poured out his soul before the Lord in these meetings showed how much he lived in the spirit of that duty, and how fully he was persuaded that, in regard to his praying people, God would yet be entreated in behalf of a guilty land, and the plague would be stayed. A large proportion of the persons who fell victims to the cholera were previously in a state of infirm health; and as Mr. Watson was now become a constant subject of disease, he was apprehensive that his life was in continual jeopardy: he therefore

lived, and preached, and prayed, and wrote, like a man who anticipated a speedy summons to his final account.

In this spirit he attended the annual watch-night in the City-Road chapel, at the close of the year. The service, as usual, commenced at nine o'clock in the evening, and was continued till the new year had begun. This has long been a favourite service, not only with the Methodists, but with Christians of other denominations, who generally crowd that house of prayer, for the purpose of passing from one year into another in religious worship, and in those serious meditations which are suggested by the rapid flight of time, and the remembrance of departed days. In such an assembly, the sermon, the prayers, the exhortations, the hymns which are sung, all direct the thoughts to opportunities which will return no more, to friends who are gone the way of all the earth, and to the fearful probability that many then present, before the next return of that season, will be numbered with the dead. At the watch-night just mentioned, the attendance was very large; the chapel was filled with people; and deep seriousness seemed to be impressed upon every countenance. The occasion was made increasingly solemn by the prevalence of the pestilence. Mr. Oakes preached the sermon, and was followed by two or three friends, who engaged in exhortation and prayer. Mr. Watson concluded the service in a manner scarcely ever to be forgotten. He was very feeble, and so seriously indisposed as to be unable to remain in the chapel during the whole service; and therefore came from his room into the pulpit, where he spoke "as a dying man to dying men." The midnight hour was approaching when he entered upon his address; and he dwelt particularly upon the principal facts mentioned in sacred Scripture, as having taken place in the night: the destruction of the first born in the land of Egypt, and of the Assyrian army, by the ministry of an angel; the agony and bloody sweat of the world's Redeemer in the garden of Gethsemane; and he then spoke of the certain appearance of Christ to judgment at the midnight hour, when the world is slumbering in carelessness and sin. Each of these subjects supplied various lessons of practical instruction, which he enforced with great earnestness, and tender affection; referring, in a very prominent manner, to the mercy of God, and his willingness to save. This was the last meeting of the kind that he was permitted to attend.

Soon after the opening of the new year, he received an invitation from a friend in the country, whose kind attentions and hospitality he had formerly experienced, pressing him to spend a few weeks under her roof, in the hope that rest, and a change of air, might be beneficial to his health. This mark of Christian friendship he received with grateful and devout feelings, and addressed the following pious letter

To Mrs. B——.

London, Jan. 29th, 1832.

My Dear Madam,—Your kind letter arrived yesterday; for which accept my grateful acknowledgments, as well as for your great kindness to me while at ——. In all these mercies I wish not only to see the hand of the great Giver, but also to feel that every friendly act of those who love him, and his ministers for his sake, lays me under new obligations so to labour in the Church of God, that I may contribute

something while on earth to its edification, and preparedness for glory. Refreshing indeed is the communion of saints on earth; and even common things are sanctified as tokens and visible signs of that new principle which Christianity has created by its "new commandment;" but the fellowship below is also in itself a symbol of the communion above. Happy if all of us make the one a constant means of preparation and progress to the other. My health is yet in a very delicate state; and could I avail myself of your kind invitation to ——, I doubt not but I should derive great benefit, both from the leisure I should enjoy, and the intellectual and moral pleasures which spring from converse with experienced Christians: but circumstances forbid me a gratification in which Mrs. Watson would be most happy to partake; and though I must preach at present as little as possible, I must ply my arrears of foreign correspondence. I trust, however, that the dispensation has not been in vain. I daily feel how entirely I depend upon the upholding of the Divine arm; and a growing conviction that absolute devotedness to God in all things, and at all times, is not to be considered so much in the light of a privilege, as a matter of positive necessity. Though sometimes "faint," let us be still "pursuing." I am, my dear madam,

Yours very respectfully and obliged.

About the same time he addressed a letter to his friend, the Rev. Jonathan Edmondson, of which the following is an extract. It shows that his health was still unimproved; and that his mind was supported under affliction and alarm by confidence in the providence and grace of God.

London, Feb. 14th, 1832.

My Dear Sir,—I could not let this opportunity pass without saying that I sympathize with you in your invalid state of health, which I hope is but temporary; and I pray that you may be spared yet many years to labour, both with tongue and pen, for the good of the Church. My own health is miserably uncertain, and leaves me little hope of long active service. However, I am resolving, by God's grace, to work while it is called to-day. Necessity lately took me to Leicester and Liverpool. Friend Carr and I had several chats about you and old times. William Rawson is dead. Mr. Henshaw, at Liverpool, becomes a supernumerary next year. So the world passes away, and we, in different modes, along with it. But brighter scenes are before us; of which may we always have an unclouded prospect! How easy it is to travel the space which has intervened since you and I spent so agreeable a year at Leicester! so truly a span is all past time. Well, I look back upon that year with pleasure, as it introduced me to your acquaintance, and I hope friendship; and I have been always happy to acknowledge that I owe my first enlargement of mind, as to men and books, to your intelligent and free conversation. For this I am still grateful.

Mrs. Watson has been confined to the house by rheumatism for nearly five months; so that we have had a sick winter; and now the cholera is surrounding us. But it is "the arrow that flieth by day;" and supposes an *archer*, and an *aim;* so we rest in wisdom and love

infinite. A dark cloud hangs over this metropolis; but the plague is one of the signs of the latter day.

At this period he suffered greatly from affliction, and was induced, by the urgent solicitations of his friends, to consult one or two of the most eminent physicians in London. He had often pursued a similar course before, but without any permanent advantage; and he was not more successful in the present instance. On his return home he remarked, in his good-natured and humorous manner, that, after being duly questioned respecting his symptoms, he was informed, with all due and professional gravity, that his disease was a derangement of the biliary system; and that he must carefully avoid all such kinds of food as were difficult of digestion, &c; information which he had received a thousand times, and for which he again expressed his obligations, and paid the accustomed fee. His days were now numbered; his disease was such as no medicine could reach; and the highest professional skill could only secure for him an occasional alleviation of his pain.

About this time the report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society for the preceding year was published. It stated that eighteen additional missionaries had been sent out; that the income of the society was £48,289. 13*s*. 0*d*.; that the number of mission stations then occupied was one hundred and fifty-six; the missionaries two hundred and eighteen; the salaried catechists and teachers, employed chiefly in the day schools, about one hundred and sixty; the gratuitous teachers in the Sunday and daily mission schools, upward of one thousand four hundred; the number of members in religious society under the care of the missionaries, exclusive of those in Ireland, forty-two thousand seven hundred and forty-three, being an increase of one thousand five hundred and fifty-seven. In the West Indies, twenty-four thousand four hundred and ninety-nine slaves were in religious society, and seven thousand two hundred and eighty-one free negroes and persons of colour. The number of children and adults in the mission schools was twenty-five thousand four hundred and twenty. Upward of three thousand of the children instructed in the schools in the West Indies were the children of slaves.

In regard to the West Indian mission, then in a very critical state, the report says,—

"In Jamaica, where the opposition to the missions has been of a harsher character, and longer continued than elsewhere, a peculiar degree of prosperity has been vouchsafed. Upward of twelve thousand members are united in Christian society on that island alone; the call for spiritual instruction and pastoral care from places additional to those already occupied has been greater than could be attended to; and the committee have now before them an earnest request from the missionaries to grant an augmentation of their number.

"In the West Indies fifty-eight missionaries are employed, who have thirty-one thousand six hundred and fifty-two members of society under their care, and near eleven thousand children and adults in the daily and Sunday schools.

"Still, however, the habits of society, the very general aversion which prevails to serious and moralizing Christianity, the influence of

pernicious examples, and, more than all, the want of a Sabbath wholly abstracted from secular tumult, care, and occupation,—a privilege certainly not known in the West Indies,—are powerful counteractious to the diffusion even of the knowledge of religion, and much more to its influence. That so much has been done by different religious bodies, under circumstances so hostile, or so neutralizing, is matter of devout thankfulness; and the effect of even a slowly advancing light and principle, is manifesting itself in a hopeful manner. The strong feeling of West India caste has received its mortal wound from that most just and too-long-delayed measure, the concession of civil privileges to the free people of colour, many of whom are among the most industrious, thriving, opulent, and intelligent members of West Indian society; and now that barrier is broken down, it is hoped that native agents may be multiplied, who shall be raised ultimately to the Christian ministry, and convey more rapidly the truth and the influence of our Divine religion to the many hundreds of thousands who are yet, to the opprobrium of our country and of our Christian profession, suffered to live and die in paganism and vice and misery. Another pleasing indication is, that a stronger feeling is manifested among many of the inhabitants, of the towns at least in the different islands, in favour of the sanctification of the Sabbath, by the abolition of the markets, and the allowing that day to all, in the fulness of that right in which it is conveyed to them by the law of God."

The conclusion of this report was written by Mr. Watson; and in piety and sacred eloquence is equal to the happiest of his former compositions.

"The very successes which have been vouchsafed to missionary societies are so disproportioned in their nature and results to the agency which has been employed to produce them, that they entirely annihilate the consideration of every thing human, before the manifestation of Divine interpositions. This consideration, which so powerfully tends to encourage hope, impresses also upon us the most humble dependence upon God alone. The triumphs which have been won are the triumphs of believing, waiting prayer; and prayer shall achieve the final triumph, because in its true spirit it excludes the boastings of man, and despairs of every thing but the faithfulness of God. O for a steadier regard to these great principles, and a larger increase of the spirit of prayer! Be it so, then, that difficulties should environ our path, and discouragements chill our hearts; that the cloud should sometimes lower where the cheering light now breaks; that the world should be agitated, and the Church tried; still, with our hand upon the altar of our God shall we sing amidst the rocking of the very storm, 'Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; for the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.'

"And whatever views may be entertained of the present commotions of Europe, whether they be viewed as ominous of times of trial which are approaching, or as the shaking of those things which must be removed before that kingdom of Christ which cannot be removed shall be established in professing Christian nations in power and purity, the chief fields of missionary labour lie far beyond these troubled scenes, and are open for unabated and enlarged exertion. To

elevate the mind, and welcome the oppressed slave to the mercies of the Gospel, in which he has a right which no injustice can wrest from him; to erect the trophies of eternal mercy on the shores of his native Africa, where the crimsoned banners of a guilty avarice have so deeply dishonoured the Christian name; to lead up the Hottentot, the Caffre, and the Boschuana, to humanity and piety; to guide the erring steps of eastern idolaters, wandering in the gloom, and trembling at the horrors of their own superstition, into the pure and peaceful paths of truth, and to the consolatory promises of the Redeemer; to enlarge the already glorious triumphs of the cross, so conspicuous in the Pacific Ocean, that even the magicians of worldly philosophy themselves now acknowledge 'that this is the finger of God;' to publish Christ, where that name 'above every name' has not been pronounced; to declare peace where peace is unknown; to pour forth light where all is darkness; to plant immortal fruits where all is wilderness; and to commence a warfare against the powers of hell, where all is deadly subjection to the tyrant destroyer;—these are our labours, these our fields of toil and triumph. They lie where the ambition of warriors, the politics of statesmen, the strifes of parties, and the struggles of the civilized world, will not disturb us; and there may we pursue our peaceful career, descending as the shower upon the secluded desert till it waves with the harvests of righteousness; and there silently build our spiritual temple, like that in the erection of which no sound of the hammer was heard, until God takes possession of it in the sight of all nations, and fills it with his presence and glory. Then 'incense and a pure offering' shall be presented to the Lord by all people; offerings of penitence, and prayer, and faith, and love;—'a sweet incense, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.'"

Scarcely were these cheering statements respecting the prosperity of the Wesleyan missions placed before the world, when the most appalling accounts were received from the island of Jamaica. The government at home had sent out some new regulations tending to meliorate the condition of the slaves, which were resisted by the local authorities, many of whom expressed themselves in language highly inflammatory, and even threatened to renounce their allegiance to the British crown, rather than submit to this interference with their authority over their human "property." Many of the negroes, impatient of the chain, panting for liberty, and actuated by an erroneous persuasion that the king had given them their freedom, and that it was withheld by their masters, raised an extensive insurrection, in which many plantations were seriously injured. The blame of this rash and unjustifiable act was immediately charged upon the missionaries, who were loaded with the foulest calumnies, and held up as objects of public execration. In vain was it declared by the governor himself, that no charge whatever lay against the Wesleyan missionaries; the editor of one of the newspapers, himself a member of the house of assembly, expressed his wish that these unoffending men might be shot, and then hung up in the woods to diversify the scene! An association was formed under the name of the Colonial Church Union, the professed object of which was the maintenance of the Church of England, against the encroachments of "sectarians;" but its real design was, the prevention of all future attempts to instruct and evangelize the slave

population. The union comprehended among its active agents and promoters, not only Episcopalians, but Jews, Deists, Presbyterians, and libertines; and setting at open defiance all law and authority, they proceeded to destroy the mission chapels, and sought to murder the missionaries; one of whom they covered with tar, and then attempted to set him on fire. A part of the press in England adopted and propagated the calumnies against the missionaries from the Jamaica papers.

These outrages were overruled by Divine Providence, so as to hasten the measure of emancipation; but for a season it was doubtful "whereunto these things would grow." They made a deep and painful impression upon Mr. Watson's mind. The operations of the mission in some parts of the island were at an end. Chapels which had been erected by a poor and oppressed people, under great pecuniary difficulties, and with many prayers, were laid in ruins; the missionaries were hanged in effigy, compelled to place themselves under the immediate protection of the civil power, or pining away in loathsome dungeons; the congregations, societies, and children belonging to the schools, were "scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd;" and several pious slaves, innocent of any guilty participation in the insurrection, were barbarously murdered under the sanction of military law. Mr. Watson was the less able to meet disasters of this kind because of that state of bodily suffering under which his days and nights were spent, and the mental depression which it often produced. He defended the persecuted missionaries in the Wesleyan Magazine, and commended them and their injured flocks to the merciful protection of almighty God.

As his health continued to decline, he was advised to retire from London, and spend a few weeks at Brighton, in the hope that rest, and a change of air, might at least mitigate his sufferings, and tend to the renewal of his strength. That his mind might be perfectly at rest, he was accompanied by the greater part of his family; and every means that the tenderest affection could dictate was tried to soothe his spirit, and abate the power of disease. Here he employed his time in conversation with his friends, in walking by the sea side, and in writing. He took with him the numerous hymn books published by the two Wesleys, at an early period of their public life, intending to make a selection from them of such hymns as are not now generally known, for personal and domestic use. These sacred compositions fully accorded with the devout feelings of his own heart; and he thought it a subject of just regret, that so many noble hymns, the effusions of Mr. Charles Wesley's hallowed genius, should be at present lost to the Church of God, being scattered through several publications which are rarely to be met with.

During his stay at Brighton the printing of his Theological and Biblical Dictionary was finished, and the work was published in a complete form. Its sale had already been very encouraging; and he lived to see the third edition rapidly passing through the press. It is professedly a compilation; yet it contains many original articles of superior value, and others which he greatly improved. Calmet's "Dictionary of the Bible," Harmer's "Observations upon various Passages of Scripture," Dr. Clarke's "Travels in Syria and the Holy

Land," Paxton's "Illustrations of Scripture," Hale's "Analysis of Chronology," Jones's "Biblical Cyclopædia," Martindale's "Dictionary of the Bible," Rees's "Cyclopædia," Harris's "Natural History of the Bible," Hug's "Introduction to the New Testament," Lowth's "Lectures on the Poetry of the Hebrews," were among the works from which he made the most copious extracts; and other writers, of less note, and in great variety, were made to contribute toward a publication, certainly the best in its kind that has yet appeared in the English language. Many persons, well acquainted with Biblical and theological literature, could have compiled a Dictionary of value and utility from these and similar sources; but few could have made the selections with equal judgment; and fewer still could have supplied deficiencies with the same ability and tact.

It is the general lot of eminent men, at one time or another, to be objects of unfounded jealousy; and Mr. Watson has not escaped the operation of this unworthy feeling. The Dictionary contains no distinct article on Christian perfection; and some persons have hence inferred that he was not sound in this branch of the Wesleyan faith. Without presenting to him any remonstrance while he was living and ready to answer for himself, they have endeavoured, since his decease, to raise and propagate doubts respecting his orthodoxy as a Methodist preacher. Had they examined his Theological Institutes, they would have found that their suspicions have no foundation to rest upon; for he has there expressed himself fully, and in a manner the most satisfactory, on this point of Christian doctrine and attainment. The omission of this subject in the Dictionary was purely accidental; as also was the omission of articles under the heads of mercy, and Sonship of Christ. But would any man, of even ordinary candour, that knew Mr. Watson, assert that he denied the Divine and eternal Sonship of our Lord; and that mercy is both an attribute of God, and a human passion and duty? The insinuation is unfounded; and the reason which has been alleged in its support is palpably absurd. In his Dictionary he says, "Sanctification in this world must be complete; the whole nature must be sanctified, all sin must be utterly abolished, or the soul can never be admitted into the glorious presence of God."

Mr. Watson returned from Brighton in time to attend the anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, at the end of April. On this occasion sermons were preached before the society by Dr. Adam Clarke, and by the Rev. Messrs. John Bowers and William M. Bunting. Sir Richard Ottley, late chief justice in Ceylon, was expected to take the chair, but was prevented by indisposition; and his place was supplied by Mr. Haslope, one of the general treasurers. At the public meeting which was held in Exeter-Hall, the following resolution was moved by the Rev. John Campbell, minister of the tabernacle, London, and seconded by Mr. Bowers:—"That this meeting gratefully acknowledges those assurances received by the committee from his majesty's government, that every means shall be employed in protecting the missionaries sent forth by this and other societies for the conversion of the negro slaves in the West Indies; and deeply sympathizes with a kindred society in the persecutions to which its excellent missionaries have been subjected in the island of Jamaica, and in the losses

which it has sustained by a wanton and profane destruction of its chapels by mobs of whites, in the very presence of magistrates themselves; exhibiting another proof of that pitiable hostility to slave instruction which exists among many persons in that colony, and a disgraceful and mischievous example of an infatuated defiance of law and justice."

The "kindred society" here mentioned was the Baptist Missionary Society, whose property had been destroyed by the Colonial Church Unionists to a fearful extent, and whose missionaries had been persecuted with a fierceness truly barbarian. Before the resolution was submitted to the meeting, Mr. Watson came forward, and, with great bodily weakness, but with an energy of mind and an intensity of feeling seldom surpassed, even by himself, spoke to the following effect:—

I do not rise to make a regular address; but merely to comment a little more fully on a part of the resolution which has just been moved and seconded. That resolution expresses at once the gratification with which the meeting has heard of the promises of protection which government holds out, and its sympathies with those who have so lately suffered by persecution in Jamaica. I cannot but regret the absence of Mr. Buxton and Dr. Lushington,—names consecrated to humanity;—an absence occasioned by circumstances they could not control. Those gentlemen would, doubtless, have made statements which would have thrown new light on some of the topics which have entered into the discussions of this morning. I would observe that others, also, are absent on this occasion, who have formerly been accustomed to lend us at least the sanction of their presence at our meetings. I cannot but say that I deeply regret the cause of that absence. They have at length discovered,—and I am surprised they did not discover it before,—that Christian missions are not intended to perpetuate slavery. They appear to have thought that the only thing for which Christianity was designed, was to render the slaves well contented with their bondage; to teach them how to bear injury and oppression with patience; and to polish the chain, it may be, but then to rivet it upon their necks for ever. Of those individuals we have now taken a friendly leave; nor, I am happy to say, has theirs been a farewell of a hostile nature. It is not likely that they and we shall soon meet again. I only wish them more enlarged views, and more correct feelings. But for no consideration of patronage, let it be ever so splendid, or ever so commanding, will we make a sacrifice of our principles, or disguise our honest sentiments.

We have, indeed, very properly imposed restraints on missionaries; we have inculcated upon them the most cautious reserve; nay, a total silence on the civil wrongs of the slave; lest injudicious language should interfere with the great and all-important objects which the missionary has in view, and which, however we may long to see the chains of the slave struck off, we consider of still greater moment than his freedom. But if we have thus taught our missionaries to suppress the remonstrances of humanity; to stifle the swelling indignation which the spectacle of slavery cannot but inspire; if we have taught them to turn away and weep in silence over the miseries and degradation of their fellow men, when, had they allowed themselves to give utterance

to their feelings, they would have spoken in a voice of thunder; if, I say, we have been obliged to impose silence on their tongues, no silence is to be imposed on ours. They, indeed, have to do with the slaves; they are in immediate contact with inflammable materials; and their duty is plain. But we have not to do immediately with the bondsmen of our colonies; but, through assemblies like this, with the British people, parliament, government; and before them we have no motive to enfore secresy, or to impose silence. To these we will speak our mind. Nor could our silence, were we disposed to maintain it, secure a single benefit to any party; no, not even to the colonists themselves. That "mound" to which allusion has been already made by a former speaker, that mound by which the colonists would shut out every thing like knowledge or liberty might be for the time strengthened by the silence of the British public; but the waters would be rising behind it, till, at length, without premonition, and with the rush of an irresistible stream, they would burst the frail embankment, and sweep, in awful desolation, over the slave islands. Such must necessarily be the consequence of slavery, sooner or later, if left to itself. It is for the colonists, then, that I speak, as well as in the cause of God and man. There are circumstances connected with Jamaica which have both a discouraging and an encouraging aspect. It is true that we have to encounter the hostility of a body of men, neither few in number, nor wanting in influence, whose hatred of missionaries and missions is as blind, furious, malignant, and indiscriminate, as ever filled human bosoms. No articles so wicked, so atrocious, so malevolent, have ever issued from the public press, as those in two or three of the Jamaica newspapers, and especially in the infamous Courant, in which the whites have been exhorted to hunt, hang, or shoot the sectarians, as they are called. I do not scruple to say, that a spirit so perfectly diabolical was never exhibited by the savages of North America, or the cannibals of New-Zealand. But we must not forget, that this dark picture is relieved by some circumstances of an opposite character. Among the foremost of these may be mentioned the promises of protection which his majesty's government have promptly given. On this I can make the most explicit statements. In reply to a letter to Lord Goderich, which the committee had thought it their duty to draw up, an answer has been sent, in which his lordship expresses his sense of the discretion and judgment manifested by our missionaries in Jamaica during the late disturbances.

But there is another encouraging circumstance. It is true, that the enemies of missions exhibit an indomitable malice,—a malice, by the by, equally strong against all good men; for it is not to sectarians that it is confined, but it extends to the pious and active clergy and catechists. The feeling is not bigotry, which is generally supposed to mean, and very often is, an extravagant attachment to what is in itself good; this is hatred of all that is good. Yet, though there are many such, there are some, also, of a very different character, and who manifest a very different conduct. And here I cannot but allude to a topic not before introduced,—the privileges lately conferred on the free coloured people, by which the wretched prejudices against man for the mere colour of his skin have received their death blow. By this means, a class is raised into political existence who cannot but have

the kindliest sympathies with the bondsmen of those islands. Many persons of this class are intelligent, educated, and influential; and, being now admitted to equal civil rights, we may expect to see them in time elevated to the offices of the magistracy, and to the colonial assemblies. These are the hope of the colonies; and, to their honour be it spoken, they have stood by the missionaries throughout the storm, and defended them against white mobs at the hazard of their lives. It is with the highest pleasure, also, that I advert to the noble stand made by some Jamaica prints, and more especially "the Watchman." The tone it assumes is more than creditable; in a land of slavery it dares to plead for freedom, and ably advocates the cause of justice, religion, and humanity, against those who oppose them all. The free people of colour have, both by their conduct and writings, entitled themselves to the deepest gratitude of the friends of missions. We repel the charge so often alleged, that missionaries have excited the slaves to revolt.—We are not afraid to meet it. As to the unhappy event to which this unworthy aspersion refers, every body must lament it. All must see that the slaves, while doing some injury to others, are inflicting yet deeper on themselves. The "wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God;" and it is our duty to teach them this. We lament the insurrection as much as others; but surely it is utterly preposterous to pretend that this event originated in missions. There are other causes obvious as they are powerful. The greatest of all is slavery itself. The consequences by which it is necessarily attended need no other solution than is furnished by itself; and we might well be surprised if it ever bore other fruits. You cannot make a man in love with chains and bondage, with unremitted and unrewarded labour. His heart must chafe and swell; it must abhor the chain that binds him, and the hated hand of him that imposes it. And not only must slavery, under any circumstances, exasperate those who feel its oppressive yoke, but in the present case the slave had been led to expect speedy emancipation, by the very violent and public opposition of his master to the ameliorating plans of government, and all the customary horrors of slavery were darkened and aggravated by the disappointed hope of freedom. How such a hope came to be entertained is by no means a mystery. However strict the jealousy which watches over them, however carefully closed may be the avenues by which intelligence from Europe may reach them, still they cannot be entirely shut out from floating rumours, vague and uncertain reports, which, in fact, would do the business yet more effectually than authentic intelligence. They had heard that they were frequently the subject of discussion in the legislature of the mother country; that many of the great and the good were interesting themselves in their behalf; and that the sympathies, and compassion, and prayers of the Christian Church were in their favour. The voice of indignation, in which England has so often expressed its abhorrence of slavery, had not wholly escaped their ears. The very newspapers of the island would inform them of all this. But there was another cause of their revolt, and that was the immediate one: I mean the depriving the slaves, on some plantations, of those Christmas holidays which they had for so many years enjoyed. This led to the first movement of the insurrection; and beyond this nothing can be traced. It seems most reasonable to believe, that the subse-

quent progress of the insurrection was accidental, the effect of circumstances, which none could foresee and none control. It became a pell-mell affair, in which perhaps white and black, the militia and the slaves, were equally carried away by fear and by revenge. And, upon a calm review, can any one wonder? Attempts to improve their condition with reference to ultimate emancipation, they knew, were making by government itself, and by benevolent men in parliament; all of which their masters and the authorities of the island most violently, openly, and passionately opposed. On the one hand, hopes had sprung up; they might be extravagant, but for that very reason they would be the stronger: and, on the other, they saw the door closing upon them again; felt that "deferring of hope" which maketh the heart sick; saw an intermediate power standing between them and the parent state itself; and the result was insurrection. Thus we may find sufficient causes for these unhappy events, in no respect to be justified, without affixing the blame upon the Christian missionary.

That our missionaries stand clear from specific charges, is admitted; yet this is owing partly to the fact that there were very few in the disturbed districts, and partly that those obtained, just before the insurrection broke out, an intimation of the storm. This enabled them to call together their people, and inculcate those lessons of prudence which secured them against the evil day. The Baptist brethren were without any such warning, and were unable therefore to adopt these wise precautions. But, even independently of this, no man of common sense would be so absurd as to charge these fearful proceedings upon any missionary. They had every conceivable motive to deter them from such combined wickedness and folly, and not one motive to induce them to it. Most cordially, most deeply do I sympathize with that kindred society which has sustained such loss and such injury at the hands of wanton outrage; and if there be no other way of repairing this loss, I hope that those sanctuaries of mercy which have been laid waste will be re-erected by our common efforts. Should such a step be resorted to, I hope and believe that we shall not be found wanting;—that we shall show that we sympathize with them, not in word only, but in deed.

Let me say, in conclusion, that the cause of our oppressed fellow men can only be trusted with confidence with the religious public, and they will not abandon it. Mere politicians walk by "sight," not by "faith;" they trust little to God, and to a good cause: and as for some clamourers for political liberty, it means with them, I perceive, a selfish liberty; they would restrict it within the four seas which encircle us. At the same time, I admit that there are many high-toned men who are deeply anxious to wipe off this blot in the scutcheon of Britain.—But my chief confidence is in the Gospel. The infatuated slaveholders might make the most profitable use of missionary societies, their agents, and, through them, of the religious slaves mixed with the general population. We could undertake to keep down insurrection; to insure the most profound tranquillity. "Why have you not done it then in this instance?" it will be asked. I answer, that Christian missionaries have not had the means of fully employing their influence. They have never yet been placed, in those colonies, on Christian ground. The minister of Christ there may preach to the servant, but he may not

preach to the master; he may teach the slave the duties of passive obedience and non-resistance, but he is not to inculcate on the planter those dispositions, the exercise, the active exercise, of which can alone render slavery even tolerable. Beside, if it is expected that we should instruct them in the duty of submission to unalleviated, unconditional, interminable slavery, we spurn the office; nor would you support such apostles. But if it be expected from us, that we exhort the missionaries to discountenance all but legal means of carrying into effect the claims of justice and humanity, and to warn and beseech the slaves to patience; that we have done, and shall do.

We gladly and confidingly leave the matter to the calm consideration of the legislature, fortified by public opinion. Let government proceed cautiously, but with good faith, securing all interests as far as possible, but still resolved to accomplish the abolition of slavery, and that at no very distant date, and we go along with such views. Be as prudent as you will; but let us see the end of slavery; let us have some reasonable ground of hope that this detestable system will at length be broken up. If allowed to impart such a hope to the slaves, missionaries would be able to do what is now impossible. Then the instructions of religion would come with additional weight, and would be more cordially embraced; the slave, in the tranquil and consoling hope of one day seeing himself released from the shackles of slavery, or, at least, that his children will shake them off for ever, would be no longer prone to resort to insurrection, or the evil disposed would be counteracted by the religious slaves, and through these, rightly and fully informed of the state of the case by their teachers, all turbulent designs would be discovered and prevented. But what is the present state of things? All that a missionary can do is to be silent on the civil condition of those to whom he preaches; he can give general exhortations to good conduct; but he cannot deal with them as reasonable beings; he cannot, he dare not dissipate their delusive notions on what is doing at home in their behalf; that is, he dare not state the case as it is; for the very suspicion of having intimated that the days of slavery are numbered, and that the hour of freedom is approaching, would be considered sufficient to consign a missionary to a loathsome dungeon, or to send him to a court martial. Let then the missionaries be put on Christian ground; let them be allowed to hold out a hope, well-defined, though it may be somewhat distant, that slavery will be abolished; and they will prove the most successful instruments of insuring the security of the planter, and the tranquillity of the population.

On the completion of his Dictionary Mr. Watson was earnestly solicited to prepare for the press two or three volumes of sermons; especially those which he had preached on missionary and other public occasions during the last twenty years of his life. With this request he was very reluctant to comply; assigning, as the reason of his unwillingness, that the interest which his discourses had created was but local and temporary, and arose principally from the comparative novelty of the mission question when he was called forth as its advocate in the Methodist congregations: but the real cause was, an unconquerable aversion which he had long cherished to the writing of sermons. This most unaccountable antipathy every one who knew

him greatly lamented; but it was too deep-rooted to be overcome. He so far yielded to the importunity of his friends as to make the attempt; and wrote the sermon entitled, "Christianity the Wisdom of God in a Mystery." That he intended when he began to compose this discourse, that it should be followed by others, appears from the fact, that he wrote upon the first page of his manuscript, "Sermons on various Subjects and Occasions. By R. Watson." He had not, however, quite finished the sermon before his resolution failed; and when he had gone through the argumentative part of his subject, before he had written the application, he laid aside his paper, and entirely abandoned the design.

Some time after the commencement of his ministry in the City-Road chapel, in the year 1829, he entered upon a course of lectures on the Epistle to the Romans; which many of his hearers requested him to publish. In consequence of the frequent interruptions of his ministry, occasioned by the failure of his health, he had not then been able to proceed beyond the eighth chapter; and it had become very doubtful whether he could redeem the pledge which he had given to the congregation, at least before the time of his removal. The lectures which he had already delivered were almost entirely extempore; he had only preserved a bare outline of the course of argument which he had pursued in each; and he was strongly inclined to fill up his plan, and to publish the whole without delay. He made the attempt; and wrote the sermon entitled, "St. Paul's Confidence in the Gospel;" giving to his manuscript the general title of, "Sermons illustrative of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans; with Notes, serving as a farther Commentary upon the more difficult Passages." As his design was, to bring out the meaning of the apostle distinctly and fully, he soon found that the plan which he had adopted was very inconvenient; he therefore abandoned it altogether, and formed the resolution, if God should spare his life, to attempt an Exposition, not of the Epistle to the Romans only, but of the entire New Testament. For this responsible task he possessed superior qualifications. The Greek Testament had been a subject of his daily study for many years; and he had paid close attention to the principles of Biblical criticism; while his sound and discriminating judgment, and that fine taste by which he at once perceived and felt the beautiful sentiments and phraseology of the Scriptures, rendered him a safe and instructive guide in their interpretation. "I do not," said he to the writer of these memoirs, "make great pretensions to learning; but I think I can judge of the critical labours of learned men, —give the English reader the *results* of their elaborate disquisitions and inquiries,—and show the theological bearing of the sacred text.— It shall be a principle with me to evade no difficulties, however formidable, but to grapple with them in the best manner that I am able."

Having formed his plan, he entered upon its execution with an energy and a vigour which were truly astonishing, considering his personal sufferings, and the enfeebled state of his health. He devoted every hour that he could command to this work; his progress in it was rapid and satisfactory; and its influence upon his own mind was cheering and salutary. If his life should be spared, he believed that he should be able to complete his Exposition of the New Testament in three years; but he often remarked, "If I die before the work is

finished, I shall not lose my labour; for the spiritual benefit to my own mind is worth all the labour."

The conference of this year was held at Liverpool; and Mr. Watson attended this annual assembly of his brethren with very devout and hallowed feelings. The malignant cholera prevailed in that town to an alarming extent; and many fears were entertained that the preachers would not escape that terrible scourge. During the week which preceded the conference, and while the preparatory committees were sitting, a day of special prayer was observed, and meetings of intercession were held by the society and congregation belonging to the Brunswick chapel, when many fervent supplications were presented to the throne of grace that the ravages of the pestilence might cease, the lives of the preachers be preserved, and the health of the town restored. Mr. Watson took a prominent part in these services, and prayed with a power and an importunity which seemed more than human, and which made so deep an impression upon the minds of those who were present as to be a subject of general remark for a long time afterward. The prayer was heard; the disease soon began to abate; and the preachers, and the families by whom they were kindly entertained, were all mercifully preserved.

Mr. Watson's appearance at this conference seriously affected his friends. His strength was greatly reduced; his countenance was unusually pale and wan; he was in almost constant pain; but his spirit was remarkably pious and cheerful. He lodged at the house of his faithful and affectionate friends, Mr. and Mrs. Kaye, where several of the preachers with whom he was particularly intimate met him; and his conversation was spiritual, instructive, and edifying. It was evident that he "walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost;" and was anxious to bring all around him into the same holy and happy temper. His weakness rendered him unable to take a leading part in the business of conference; but he occasionally expressed his sentiments on subjects which he deemed important. How deeply his mind was interested in his Exposition of the New Testament, might be gathered, not only from his conversation, but from the fact, that he spent a considerable part of his time in the conference in the revision of his notes upon St. Matthew's Gospel.

During the conference he preached one Sunday evening in the Brunswick chapel, to a crowded assembly. His text was, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. As for thee, also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee," Zech. ix, 9–12. His attention had been specially directed to this subject a few weeks before, when writing his Exposition of St. Matthew's Gospel, in which this prophecy is quoted, and its accomplishment recognized. When he was engaged upon that part of the evangelical narrative he called

upon a friend in London, and in the course of conversation said, "Why did our Lord ride into Jerusalem upon an ass?" His friend answered, "I suppose he must ride upon some animal; and that he chose an ass, because it was at hand, and asses were generally used among the Jews for that purpose." "No," said he, "that was not the reason. The horse was a warlike animal, employed in cavalry and in chariots of battle; and as such was forbidden to the rulers of the Jewish nation, Deut. xvii, 16. The kings and judges of that people rode upon asses, administering justice and law in all parts of the land, and promoting peace and order. If you read the entire prophecy in Zechariah, you will find that our Lord's riding upon an ass was a symbolical action, designed to represent the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and the peaceful results of his reign. For the King of Zion, who comes riding upon an ass, meek and lowly, who is just, and has salvation, and whose appearance the daughter of Zion is to hail with shouts of joy, will 'cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem,' destroy the 'battle bow,' and 'speak peace to the heathen.'" These views he fully illustrated in his discourse; and while he expatiated upon the justice and meekness of Christ, as the King of Zion, the nature and freeness of his salvation, the spread of evangelical truth among the heathen, and the consequent cessation of war and oppression, a glow of delight and benevolence seemed to brighten his countenance; his words were not words of fire, but of truth and holy love; he spoke with a feeling and an authority which appeared even to surpass his former ministrations; and some of his brethren, and of the congregation, were in tears during the greater part of the service.

The following letter was written by him to Mrs. Watson, in London, during an early part of the conference:—

Liverpool, Wednesday.

My Dearest Mary,—Through the Divine goodness I and all the preachers are yet in health. There are upward of three hundred present. On Friday and Saturday the cholera considerably declined; yesterday it revived; but upon the whole it is thought to be on the decline, both in extent and virulence. However, both here and in London the arrows fly thick, and we have need to watch and pray. May our God preserve us, that we may meet again in health and peace!

It gave me great pleasure to hear from Mary that you were better. May you, by the Divine blessing, be speedily restored to your usual health; and may we be spared to live to the glory and praise of God! Write to me by return of post, to say whether you are all well. I am as anxious about you all as you can possibly be about me; for we are in danger in both places. Give my best love to Mary and Mr. Dixon.

As Mr. Watson's strength was now so greatly impaired as to render him unable to discharge the duties of the itinerant ministry, the conference complied with the request of the missionary committee, and appointed him to the office of resident secretary to the missionary society, with the Rev. Messrs. James and Beecham. He took the place of Dr. Townley, who was compelled to retire through ill health; and it was hoped that, by an entire cessation from labour, the doctor would recover his wonted vigour; and that Mr. Watson, by avoiding the night

air, and frequent preaching, would be able for several years to serve the mission cause and instruct the world by his writings.

Prior to the meeting of this conference Mr. Watson executed a deed, by which he conveyed the copy right of all his works to trustees, in behalf of the connection, excepting his "Conversations for the Young," which he still retained for the benefit of his family. For this extraordinary act of generosity he received the acknowledgments of his brethren, which are thus recorded in the printed minutes:—"The most cordial thanks of the conference are justly due, and are hereby affectionately tendered, to the Rev. Richard Watson, for his eminently liberal and disinterested conduct in having presented to the connection the copy right of several of his highly valuable and important works, namely, his Theological Institutes, Life of Mr. Wesley, Biblical Dictionary, and Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley; and this resolution shall be inserted in the printed minutes of conference."

Still true to the cause of negro emancipation, and affectionately mindful of those that were in bonds, and denied all access to the ordinances of religious worship, and aware of the immense importance of keeping this great subject before the eyes of the religious people of this country, Mr. Watson drew up the following strong resolutions, which the conference unanimously adopted:—

"1. The conference feels that it is rendered imperative upon it, by every disclosure of the real character of colonial slavery, to repeat its solemn conviction of the great moral guilt which the maintenance of that system entails upon our country; and year by year, until some effectual step shall be taken by government to terminate it, to call upon the members of the Wesleyan societies throughout Great Britain and Ireland, to promote that important event, by their prayers, by their influence, by diffusing all such publications as convey correct information on this subject, by supporting those institutions which are actively engaged in obtaining for our enslaved fellow men and fellow subjects the rights and privileges of civil freedom, and by considerately and most conscientiously giving their votes, at the election of members of parliament, only to those candidates for their suffrages, in whose just views and honest conduct on this important question they have entire confidence.

"2. The conference also feels itself called upon to express its deep sense of the injustice done to its missionaries in the island of Jamaica, and of the outrages committed upon the property of the mission there, in the destruction of five chapels by lawless mobs of white persons, notwithstanding the peaceable conduct of the slaves connected with the Wesleyan societies, during the late insurrection, and the acknowledged prudent conduct of their missionaries. These circumstances serve to impress the conference more deeply with the painful truth, that the system of slavery is frequently even more corrupting to the heart, and more destructive of religious influence, in the agents of the slave proprietors in the colonies, than in the slaves themselves; and afford additional and most powerful reasons for the renewed efforts of the friends of religious liberty, of negro instruction, and of the extension of the kingdom of our Saviour in the world by the instrumentality of Christian missions, to obtain for the slaves, and for those who labour in the charitable work of their instruction, a security for the exercise of the rights of conscience,

which nothing can effect but the entire and speedy abolition of the system of slavery itself. The conference farther expresses its affectionate sympathy with the missionaries in the island of Jamaica, in the sufferings and injuries to which they have been so unrighteously subjected through the intolerance and violence of 'wicked and unreasonable men.' And, while it gratefully records its testimony to their excellent conduct, in neither betraying the principles of eternal justice and morality as to the civil wrongs of the slaves, nor mixing themselves up, while employed in their mission, with such discussions on the case as might be dangerous, it exhorts them still to cultivate the same spirit, to exert the same zeal for the instruction and salvation of the population of the West India colonies, and to walk steadfastly by those excellent rules which are embodied in their printed instructions.—The conference more especially expresses its approbation of the conduct of the missionaries who have been now for several years employed in Jamaica, because, at a former period, through the unfaithfulness of one, and the timid apprehensions of two others, some resolutions were published in the year 1824, bearing a construction far too favourable as to the condition of the slaves, and the general state of society there; which resolutions were condemned by the missionary committee for the time being, and by the ensuing conference. And since these resolutions have been lately made use of as evidence in favour of the system of slavery, the conference repeats its strong disapprobation of them, as conveying sentiments opposed to those which the conference has at all times held on the subject of negro slavery; and not less so to the views and convictions of the great majority of its missionaries, who have been and now are employed in the West India colonies.

"3. The conference acknowledges, with unfeigned gratitude, the attention which has been uniformly paid by his majesty's government to the representations of the missionary committee in London, on all subjects connected with the persecutions and injuries to which the missions have from time to time been exposed, especially in the colony of Jamaica: and the conference has heard, with peculiar satisfaction, the assurance conveyed to the committee by his majesty's secretary of state for the colonial department, in a letter dated July 21st, that it is 'the firm determination of his majesty's government to exert to the utmost all the constitutional power of the crown in order to punish the outrages which the committee have complained of; and to afford full protection to all classes of his majesty's subjects, so long as they shall conduct themselves with propriety, and act in obedience to the law.'"

Dr. Adam Clarke was present at this conference, and took an active part in its affairs. He sat near Mr. Watson during the whole time; and his spirit was cheerful and pious. At the request of his brethren, and of the Liverpool friends, he preached two or three times; and his sermons were delivered with great pathos, and simplicity of manner. When the business of the conference was concluded, he said to Mr. Watson, as they shook hands together, "Brother Watson, I advise you, with as little delay as possible, to leave this town. The cholera, though it has abated, still prevails in Liverpool; and what God is about to do with the people here is only known to himself." This

appears to have been the last interview between these eminent men, both of whom were evidently under considerable alarm because of the judgments of the Almighty.

On his return to London Mr. Watson began to prepare for his removal from the City-Road to his former residence in Myddleton-square. He resigned his pastoral charge with strong and deep emotions; for his attachment to the friends in the circuit generally, and especially to the society at the City-Road, was very great; and he knew that for the manner in which he had discharged the duties of his superintendency he must render a strict account to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. In the latter years of Mr. Wesley's life the City-Road chapel appears to have had a larger share of his ministry than any other place; he paid a special regard to the regulation and interests of the society; in the house connected with the chapel he breathed his last; and in the burying ground belonging to it his remains are deposited. The influence of that great man's example and labours appears to have remained with the society to the present time; and to be especially manifest in the piety and order of the people, and the entire absence of every thing approaching to faction and insubordination. During his residence at the City-Road the local preachers had regularly breakfasted with Mr. Watson on the Sunday morning, according to immemorial usage; when the plan of labour for the day was read over, and the vacant places were supplied. On these occasions he always introduced some question of Christian theology, upon which he used to elicit their remarks and inquiries, and then expatiate upon it in a manner calculated to promote their piety, and increase their knowledge. In consequence of these interesting and affectionate interviews, their attachment to him was unbounded; and his regard for them was very cordial and sincere. He often spoke of them with great esteem and love.

Several of the friends in the circuit had sympathized with him in his afflictions, and done every thing in their power to alleviate his sufferings. He owed much to the professional skill and Christian friendship of James Hunter, Esq., of Islington, having been for many years under the care of that eminent surgeon. Mr. and Mrs. Buttress, of Homerton, had frequently invited him to spend a few days in their kind family, for the benefit of relaxation and country air; and many other friends had shown him marks of affection and respect, all of which had made a deep impression upon his generous mind, and rendered the dissolution of his pastoral relation to them solemn and affecting.

Before his removal Mr. Watson met the society in the City-Road chapel on a Sunday evening, when he delivered his parting admonitions to the people of whom he had had the charge for the last three years. He dwelt upon the nature, benefits, and obligations of religious fellowship; the signs which indicate a Church's prosperous or declining state; intermixed with many solemn, tender, and faithful exhortations to a steady perseverance in the course of public and private duty. He stated, that the three years which were then closed had been the happiest of his life; and that the daily attendance of the members of society upon their several class meetings, and the other means of grace, which he had been accustomed to witness in his house adjoining the chapel, had conveyed to his mind the most pleasing

thoughts and emotions. Recollecting the uncertainty of his own life, and the multitudes of devout people who had formerly worshipped in that chapel, and whose spirits were then in the paradise of God,—many of whom he had known,—he called upon the friends then present to unite with him in singing the fine hymn of Mr. Charles Wesley, beginning,—

"Come, let us join our friends above,
That have obtain'd the prize;
And on the eagle wings of love
To joys celestial rise.
Let all the saints terrestrial sing,
With those to glory gone;
For all the servants of our King
In earth and heaven are one.

"One family we dwell in him,
One Church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.
One army of the living God,
To his command we bow;
Part of his host have cross'd the flood,
And part are crossing now."

A prayer, remarkable for its power and importunity, closed this memorable and most affecting service, and with it Mr. Watson's ministry in that favoured place. He never entered the pulpit of the City-Road chapel again.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Letters to Mr. William Shaw—Circular Letter addressed to the Missionaries—Death of Dr. Adam Clarke—Death of the Rev. Thomas Stanley—Literary Project—Letter to Mr. Benjamin Blaine—Mr. Watson's last Sermon—Death of the Rev. John James—Mr. Watson's Exposition—Rapid Decline of Mr. Watson's Health—State of the Anti-Slavery Question—Letter to Mr. Buxton, on Negro Emancipation—Notices of Mr. Watson's last Sickness, by Mrs. Bulmer, Mr. Beecham, Mr. Marsden, Mr. Ince, Mr. Dixon, and Mrs. Dixon—His Death—Resolutions of the Missionary Committee—Mr. Watson's Funeral—Mr. Bunting's Sermon on his Death—Tribute to his Memory in the Missionary Report—His Character by the Conference—Publication of his Exposition.

Within a few days of his return from the conference, Mr. Watson entered upon the duties of his secretaryship with feelings of holy zeal and delight. The two following letters, which he wrote at this time, will serve to illustrate the spirit by which he was actuated. They were addressed to a man whom he justly esteemed, as one of the most judicious and useful missionaries of modern times. The piety and wisdom of these admirable letters rendered them every way worthy of the writer, and of the man for whose guidance and encouragement they were intended.

To the Rev. William Shaw, Graham's-Town.

Hatton-Garden, London, August 20th, 1832.

My Dear Brother,—I rejoice to observe in the report of your station that you have so much to encourage you in the Graham's-

Town circuit. To keep up the spirit of ardent Methodistical piety and simplicity there, is of great importance to the work beyond; and it is cheering that you have been visited by a revival which appears to be solid and genuine. You mention it as having chiefly influenced the young people. This is of great importance; and the special care of the young will amply repay you. We too much neglect them every where: but if the children of our people were oftener catechised, and if sermons were preached to the young, and the young people of the society met separately, according to our old practice, much good would, by the Divine blessing, be the result. They are the hope of our Churches.

I am much delighted with the account you give of the native congregation; and as in the class you have individuals of the "five different nations," I hope some native agents are in preparation among you for the interior. If you have any promising young men among them, pious, inquiring, and of vigorous intellect, would it not be well to give them some advantages, by taking charge of them, lending them useful books, if they can read English, and look among them for those schoolmasters for the Caffer stations which you mention in your minutes? We wish you to have an habitual regard to the raising up of native agents, praying for them, and reporting to us any plan which you may think conducive to render them useful. A little would qualify them to act as Caffer schoolmasters; and they would still improve under the missionary at each station. What think you of this? Is it practicable now? Can it be made so in a few months, or years? Graham's-Town station, I think, ought to be a sort of religious and educational seminary, and mechanical, too, for the interior. Here your Sunday schools are very important. You report the zeal of the Sunday school teachers. Say to them that it gives the committee pleasure to hear of this; and that we pray for their success. Our catechisms are taught in your Sunday schools, I trust.

Give my love to Mrs. Shaw and the brethren.

To the Same, as Chairman of the Albany District.

London, August 20th, 1832.

Dear Brother,—In reply to your minutes, I transmit to you the views and decisions of the committee, premising that I am informed that your former communications have been regularly answered. As you appear to have been so long without hearing from the secretaries, these letters must have been delayed. Several were taken by the last brethren who were sent out. We are thankful, indeed, to our common Master, that you are generally preserved in health; and that your blessed work continues to prosper in your hands. May you enjoy the richest personal communion with your Saviour; and prove the truth of the gracious promise, in all your labours, "And, lo, I am with you alway."

Already you have been informed that the expedition to Port-Natal is not advised by the committee, on account of the expense. We cannot, at present, do more for the enlargement of the work in Caffraria; satisfied as we are of the great value of what has been achieved. Some time must now be occupied in watering, watching, and maturing what, by God's blessing, has been done. Is it not likely that a com-

mercial establishment will be made at Natal? And, if so, will not one man, and he a single man, be sufficient to commence the mission? In that case, the expense might not be so formidable. On this point you will be good enough to write to us; and take no step involving any considerable expense.

The stations will show that we have sanctioned the union of Graham's-Town and Salem. We approve, too, of the removal of our excellent and laborious brother Archbell; and think Mr. Haddy a very proper person to succeed him, provided his knowledge of Caffer is not thrown away. This is a point you have, no doubt, thought of. The language of Plaatberg, I presume, is entirely a different dialect; and in all changes it is most desirable that the advantages acquired by the attainment of a language should not even be suspended. The period of our usefulness on earth is short at the longest; and ought in all its branches to be well husbanded.

Should the answer to the last minutes have miscarried, it may be necessary to inform you again, that the committee allow the force of the reasons for giving up Somerset; and that, of course, the premises should be disposed of as soon as possible, to prevent the accumulation of debt, which no doubt you have done. At the same time, this is an additional reason why the selection of a station should be well advised and deliberate, since these changes have an air of fickleness, and always involve great expense.

We approve of your arrangement as to the translation of the Scriptures; but at the same time suggest that so sacred a work ought to be done as well as possible, and the mutual knowledge of all be brought to bear upon it. It appears to us, therefore, most advisable that a committee of two or three of those who, both by long residence in the country, and previous knowledge of language, in its grammatical principles, are the best qualified to judge of the merits of any portion of the translation, should be formed; and that the whole should have their careful revision. It will be kindly taken by the brethren, if we also suggest that the translation should not follow any of the versions or assumed "improvements" of modern translations and commentators. These may be innocent or objectionable; and are sometimes plausible when not very sound. You cannot have a better guide to the sense of the original generally, almost universally, than our own authorized version, compared with the Dutch version, which I understand is very excellent; and as for simplicity of words, I suppose that the Caffer tongue does not afford much temptation to depart from that. Mr. Wesley's Testament ought also to be before you, as he alters *little*, but *judiciously*.

The project of substituting schoolmasters for assistants, and discontinuing the latter except in new stations, appears to be well conceived. Certainly a good schoolmaster, if devoted to the work of God, would be a great acquisition; and especially if he could be employed as a Scripture reader, or something of that kind, when you get your translation ready. In many other ways might such a man be made useful; and in proportion as he makes himself so, might you advance the allowance you propose to make to such agents. Whether you can get suitable men of this class, I suppose you have well considered.

The financial accounts of the district will come before the financial

committee, as usual; and their resolutions will be transmitted in due course.

I do not note any thing more of particular importance in your minutes, on which it is necessary to express our judgment. It is highly satisfactory to us, and calls forth our gratitude to God, that under your culture so many signs of healthy moral vegetation are springing up in the wilderness. Faith, hope, and charity are all called into special exercise, and will each aid your great work, by connecting it with the blessing of God. You are founders of a new order of things in whole nations; and have need of special wisdom and all-influencing holiness. Let your work be more than ever wrought in God; and in order to this, let both you and us remember, and keep it between "the frontlets of our eyes," that we are men of one business. Be very frank with each other, in perfect brotherly affection, that you may be helps meet for each other in a work, the effect of which future ages will develope.

Present our affectionate regards to all the brethren.

For many years the secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society have drawn up a circular letter, immediately after the conference, addressed to the foreign stations, informing the brethren of any new regulations that have been adopted, and the general state of the connection at home, accompanied by such advices as might be deemed necessary. The circular for the year 1832 was written by Mr. Watson, and the following extract from this document will show the pious spirit in which he resumed the duties of his secretaryship, soon, alas, to terminate:—

"We wish you to promote and improve the edifying practice of singing, in the congregations; but to be most careful to preserve its simplicity; to prefer the old psalmody, and to discourage entirely the use of light and especially song tunes, which, through a very bad taste, have, we regret to learn, been not only permitted, but encouraged by the brethren on some of our stations. 'Christian psalmody,' says a great authority, and a man of the finest taste, ought to be '*simple*, and *noble* withal.' If there were no other reason against the use of airs composed for songs, in a congregation, the association with their original words would be sufficient. A few of them may be sung without any improper tendency, in private, by a few friends, at a social meeting; but none of them are to be tolerated in acts of public worship.

"As to the general state of the connection at home and abroad, a few observations may be acceptable to many of the brethren, who are far from the usual sources of information.

"The addition of upward of 8,000 members at home and abroad, during the past year, is a proof that the labours of the brethren have not been in vain in the Lord; and that it has pleased God, by an instrumentality, insufficient in itself, to give efficacy to the word of his grace. But the mere increase in numbers is not the sole ground of our rejoicing. The religious state of the societies at home is generally satisfactory. They form a people who know the grace of God in truth, and adorn the Gospel of God our Saviour. The doctrines of eternal truth, as taught among us, were never better understood, and never more firmly held; and of that salutary discipline which, while it holds forth assistance and encouragement to the sincere inquirer, and

never closes the door of return upon the truly penitent backslider, faithfully reproves, and, where it is fitting, separates the admonished offender from the body, there has been no relaxation. Still God is in the midst of us; our assemblies realize his presence, and receive his blessing; men, awakened from the sleep of sin, hasten to inquire after salvation; our members, walking in the fear of God and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, are edified; and thousands every year depart, in the triumph of faith, to wait for us who follow them to realms of brighter light, and to the presence of our common Saviour. With what we witness at home, we rejoice to associate the same effects abroad, and, in spirit, to behold you sowing the same immortal seed; leading, by the light of the same eternal truth, many sons to glory; and hastening with us from distant fields of labour to that same centre, the 'Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all,' where we shall, if faithful, through the grace of our Saviour, meet to recount our common conflicts and our common victories.

"In several places, during the past year, we have been favoured with very gracious revivals; and those of an eminently solid, deep, and Scriptural character. We have been especially rejoiced to receive the accounts of several of these gracious visitations abroad, and that among the heathen as well as professing Christians. On two or three of the stations among the Caffres, in Africa, a remarkable influence of God's Holy Spirit has been shed, and several awakenings and true conversions have been the result. Special visitations have also attended the work in the South Sea Islands. All these circumstances prove that God still visits his people occasionally, out of the ordinary course, and would, no doubt, do this more frequently, did we earnestly and believingly wait for it. These, too, are pledges of the performance of that general effusion of the Spirit's influence which is the subject of so many cheering prophecies, with reference to the extension of Christ's kingdom. Looking, therefore, for this 'demonstration of the Spirit,' in increasing 'power,' let us wait constantly upon God, and teach our people also, with ourselves, to wait upon him, in desire, hope, and faith. But let us be stimulated by this hope to more abundant labours; for no doctrine, rightly understood, is so encouraging to exertion. 'Until the Spirit be poured out from on high, blessed are they that sow beside all waters.'

"Still, to you and to us, there are parts of the field discouragingly barren, and obstacles present themselves to each, which appear to resist all impression. Perhaps to missionaries this lot more frequently falls. All, however, share it; but let us not faint. Let us rather encourage and strengthen each other in the Lord; determined still to stand at the post of duty, and to leave events in humble confidence with God. So greatly do the vigour and prosperity of our societies depend upon the spirit in which we as ministers live and labour, that we have all need to 'take heed to ourselves,' as well as to our doctrine; and if, on this subject, we exhort you, at the feet of many of whom we would in all humility sit, we also exhort and caution ourselves. 'Abide in me,' are words eminently suited to ministers, and must be realized in their habitual experience, if men would 'bring forth much fruit.' Never lose your first love; never rest, if you are conscious of any diminution in its ardour, until, by constant prayer, you take hold again on the Divine

strength, and make that strength your own; so that it may be felt in the vigour of your affections and the constancy of your zeal. Remember that religious declension in a minister is instantly followed by a train of the greatest evils, by pride, self confidence, sloth, and the loss of meekness and humility; and then he lies open to various temptations, and lives but to show, in his sapless and savourless ministry, how awfully he is dead to God. Brethren, let us watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation; and be always animated, not only with the hope of escape from those evils which might destroy our spirituality and usefulness, but with the anticipation of daily conquest and daily acquisition. Let us 'follow hard after God,' and then his right hand will not only sustain us, but make 'our cup run over' with blessings. The only effectual preparations for the exercises of the pulpit, are the habit of enriching the mind and heart with the word of God, so that it may live and dwell in us, and actuate all we speak and do. To the daily prayerful and hallowing study of the Divine Scriptures, we affectionately commend you. Here is the mine out of which you must dig the gold by which thousands are to be made 'rich toward God;' and here is the fountain of the water of life, the seal of which you are to break, and of which you are to be as the channels of communication to the people. Be always afraid of trusting to any thing in your ministry, but THE TRUTH as it is revealed in the Scriptures, in which God's own WISDOM is embodied, and that in words taught, not by man's wisdom, but by the Spirit of God. In explaining, enforcing, applying, and amplifying this truth, your true power as preachers will consist, and you will then be faithful 'stewards of the mysteries of God.'

"Two other observations on the subject of preaching we may be permitted to make. The first is, that it ought always to be strongly and firmly regarded by us, not as an END, but as a MEANS. If it be rested in under the former view, then this sad result will follow, that a mere professional duty will be performed without any respect to its utility; or the personal credit of the preacher will be rested in as his great concern, and so he will truly be guilty of preaching 'himself,' and not 'Christ Jesus the Lord.' How necessary is it, brethren, to guard against this; lest the natural sloth and vanity of the heart prevail against us, and we become useless to others, and offenders in the sight of Him who sent us, not only to preach to men, but to persuade them; not to boast of the brightness of the weapons of our warfare, and our own supposed dexterity in using them; but to subdue a rebel world to the obedience of faith and love. He preaches best, says an old divine, who saves the most souls.

"Nor is preaching, though a great, by any means a principal part of your duty. Many other ministerial labours and cares are required, even in our more established work at home. But, on mission stations, the important and essential services to which you are called present even a greater variety; or at least, in the absence of much of that subordinate agency which we can command, a greater share devolves upon you. You must be the main springs of every branch of exertion, and every institution connected with the Church. Visiting the people, patiently teaching the ignorant, catechising children, superintending schools, directing leaders and other agents, composing differences, affording fatherly counsel, and many other engagements, call upon all

your time and all the faculties of your souls. How much wisdom, calmness, prudence, devotion to your work, long suffering, love, mildness, firmness, and heavenly mindedness do you need! We join our prayers with yours, that those rich effusions of the Holy Spirit may rest upon you, which shall inspire you with all these qualifications, and preserve them in their full vigour.

"Nor is it unimportant that we exhort also our respected sisters, your wives, that they strive to be 'helps meet for you,' not only in contributing to your comfort and social happiness, but in your work. Let them, when they have leisure, be 'ready to every good work,' and maintain that self-denying and deep piety which shall qualify them for usefulness in the different branches of exertion which are open to them, and especially in their endeavours to do good to those of their own sex, and to children. We have had many eminent examples of useful and devoted missionaries' wives, whom those now in the same station will, we trust, honourably follow. And to their exertions, let them add a creditable order in their domestic arrangements, a wise government of their children, economy in the management of their household, and a simplicity of dress becoming the wives of men who have professed to be dead to the world, and consecrated to so holy a calling.

"We affectionately commend you all to God; and pray that your health and lives may be long preserved, and that you may prove so steadfast in your fidelity to Christ, and your engagements to his Church, that you may live in the love and esteem of your brethren; be the honoured instruments of extending and establishing the kingdom of Christ in the hearts of men, and in the world; and finally, that you may close your life and ministry in holy triumph, and with the brightest prospects of that joy of your Lord, upon which all his faithful servants shall enter."

Scarcely had the preachers time to repair to their new appointments, after the conference, before an unexampled scene of mortality was opened among them. The first that was called away was Dr. Adam Clarke; a man universally respected for his learning, and specially revered in the Methodist connection for his piety, zeal, apostolic simplicity, and usefulness as a minister of Christ. He went from Liverpool to Frome, on a visit to his son; returned home by way of Bristol; and came to Bayswater, near London, on Saturday, August 25th, intending to preach at the anniversary of the Methodist chapel in that place on the following morning. He was then in a state of ill health, and became so much worse as to be unable to fulfil his engagement. The disease proved to be the malignant cholera, of which he died on the Sunday evening, in great peace, and in the faith and hope of the Gospel. The elevation of his character, and the circumstances connected with his death, rendered his removal more than ordinarily impressive and monitory. Mr. Watson participated in the general feeling; and showed his respect for the doctor's memory by attending the funeral at the City-Road chapel, although the day was exceedingly wet, and his own health was so seriously affected, as to render exposure to the rain hazardous to his own life.

The Rev. Thomas Stanley was next separated from his family and connections, and summoned to his final reward. He was the superintendent of one of the London circuits; an active and useful member

of the missionary committee; and a most friendly and upright man. At the request of the Wesleyan book committee, he had waited upon Charles Wesley, Esq., the celebrated organist, to obtain the loan of his father's portrait,—the poet of Methodism,—for the purpose of being engraved, and was returning home with the picture in his hand, in his usual health and cheerfulness, when he sunk down upon the causeway, and instantly expired. He died on the 9th of October; and the effect of his sudden removal upon the susceptible mind of Mr. Watson, himself in a state of increasing weakness and affliction, may be easily conceived.

Under great feebleness and constant suffering he nevertheless attended the mission house in Hatton-Garden daily, watched the progress of the missions with deep interest, and discharged the duties of his office in connection with them in a manner the most vigorous and efficient. His company was sought by many persons who knew his intelligence and piety, and who wished to profit by his conversation; and he regularly attended the meetings of the committees appointed to manage the affairs of the Wesleyan Book Room in the City-Road; but he shortened his visits to his friends, and, greatly as he enjoyed the conversation of his brethren, no entreaties could induce him to prolong his stay when the business of the committees was discharged; so intent was he upon completing his Exposition of the New Testament. To finish that work seemed to be the prevailing desire of his heart.

At that time it was in contemplation to publish a series of volumes under the general title of "The Wesleyan Miscellany." Mr. Watson entered heartily into this project; and at one of the meetings of the committee to whom this work was confided, he said, "If the doctrine of Christian perfection, as taught by Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, be true, as we all believe it is, I fear we do not give that prominence to it in our preaching which we ought to do; and that some of us do not seek to realize it in our own experience, as it is our privilege and duty. To me it has long been a subject of regret, that in many places that blessed doctrine has been brought into some degree of disrepute by the objectionable spirit and conduct of the persons who have been its most zealous and prominent advocates. What Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher have written upon it is mostly in a controversial form. I confess, I should like to see the doctrine clearly and fully stated, on the authority of Scripture, without any reference to controversy; and the whole confirmed by illustrative examples, of an unexceptionable kind." At his suggestion the compilation of such a work was assigned to the Rev. Joseph Entwisle. The manner in which he spoke on this subject showed his anxiety that the Methodist societies should never lose sight of the fulness and extent of the Christian salvation; but should aspire to the uninterrupted enjoyment of that "perfect love" which "casteth out fear." Like Mr. Wesley he did not himself profess to have attained it; but during the subsequent part of his life he exhibited its fruits in full maturity and beauty.

At this time the friends in Hull were engaged in the erection of an additional Methodist chapel in that populous town, and were desirous of securing Mr. Watson's services at the opening, which was expected to take place early in the following spring. To their letter of application he returned an answer, in which he thus speaks of himself:—

To Mr. Banjamin Blaine.

London, Oct. 23d, 1832.

My Dear Sir,—I am an invalid, just able to do the in-door work of this office; but my strength is gone. My voice is cracked, by a complaint of the larynx, and my health very uncertain. I have therefore declined all engagements from home; and those which I have upon the plans in London, through sudden attacks, I frequently do not fulfil. This is my *trial.* May I have grace to submit to it with cheerfulness, and be purified in the fire! I must now pass away from the more active scenes of the Church, and from the public eye; and I submit, praying that those who are spared to work in the vineyard may have large success. For myself, I shall be glad to do a little behind the scenes while I am spared; but that is all I can look for, according to the aspect of my present circumstances.

On Sunday morning, the 28th of October, Mr. Watson attended his appointment at the Hinde-street chapel, Manchester-square, where he preached, and made the annual collection in behalf of the Wesleyan schools at Kingswood and Woodhouse-Grove. When he entered into the pulpit he was exceedingly unwell; and his wan and emaciated appearance deeply affected the congregation, many of whom were painfully apprehensive that his end was near. As he proceeded in the service he appeared to forget his infirmities, and the discourse which he delivered was made a special blessing to the people. Many of them still speak of it with emotion. His text was, "Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness," Psalm cxliii, 10. As this proved to be the last sermon that Mr. Watson ever preached, a short outline of it will not be impertinent in this place.

"Though there is a clearer revelation in the Christian Scriptures of the being and attributes of God, and especially of the existence of one God in three persons, than had previously been made to the Church, we are not to suppose that this, or any other fundamental doctrine, was first revealed by Christ and his apostles. All the elements of Divine truth are contained in the revelations which were made in the earliest ages. They are now wrought up by the hand of Him who hath raised the temple of truth from the foundation to the rich and polished corner stone. Of a trinity of co-equal and Divine persons we have many important notices in the Jewish Scriptures.

"The first notice was given at a sublime moment, when all things in the creation but man had been formed. When the earth glowed in beauty, and the heavens rolled over it in grandeur; but when as yet no creature existed which could recognize God, or with whom he could hold converse; then he said, 'Let us make man.' It seems as if his design was to unfold that mystery to man's adoring gaze; and to intimate that the man to be created was to be the special object of the love and care of each of the three persons who ineffably mingle without being confounded, in the unity of the Divine nature.

"To the Son of God give all the prophets witness. His appearing fixed their hope, and his triumphs raised their songs. Nor is the Holy Spirit kept out of view. To him the ancient saints looked, as we look, for the light of truth, for grace and consolation. David, in his peni-

tence, prays, 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from me;' justly deeming this the greatest of possible evils. For if the Spirit be finally withdrawn, our case is hopeless. In the Psalm before us, the Holy Spirit is also the object of the writer's hope and trust. Oppressed with a sense of sin, overwhelmed by his spiritual troubles, to that refuge he betakes himself. 'Thy Spirit is good;' kind, benevolent; 'lead me into the land of uprightness.'

"To that same Spirit we are taught to look, as the great agent of our salvation; and it cannot therefore be uninteresting to consider,

"I. The important appellation under which he is presented to us in the text: the good Spirit. 'Thy Spirit is good.'

"It is worthy of remark, that the Holy Spirit is never represented under any other character; never employed in acts of judgment; never arrayed in attributes of terror. As the good Spirit he is set before us in every operation of his mighty power. Many illustrations of his goodness are afforded in the works ascribed to him in nature; in the Church collectively; and in the religious experience of individuals.

"1. In nature. He had a share in the great and beneficent work of creation. The very first notice of the Spirit is an illustration of the doctrine of the text. 'The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters;' reducing chaos to order; forming every thing according to the pattern of his own idea of order and beauty; and making a beauteous world for the residence of man. This operation of the Spirit is a comment on the text, 'Thy Spirit is good.'

"Nor less conspicuous is his goodness in preservation. The continuance of the races of men and of all animals is ascribed to him: 'These all wait upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth,' Psalm civ, 27–30.

"2. In what concerns the interests of religion in the world. His agency is conspicuous in the preservation and maintenance of religion. In the old world, while Noah preached righteousness, the Spirit strove with man; he debated the matter with sinners. He is the source of inspiration. 'Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'

"His benevolence to man is manifested in the special interest he has taken in the work of human redemption. When the tabernacle was to be erected, and a beauteous system of symbols presented to faith, the Spirit, who has ever delighted to testify of Christ, connected himself with the work. He inspired the men who built the tabernacle. 'And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make

all that I have commanded thee; the tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, and the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, and the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, and the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do,' Exod. xxxi, 1–11.

"When the time for the incarnation of the Son of God arrived, the Holy Spirit produced his human nature in the womb of the virgin; and the miracles of our Lord, which were wrought by the Spirit's agency, show how he delighted to point out to man 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.' He qualified the apostles for their peculiar office and work; and has provided a succession of ministers in the Church to this day. For this, also, is his prerogative, according to St. Paul's address to the Ephesian elders, 'Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.'

"3. Religious experience. He seeks all, and strives with all. He convinces men of sin; hastens with the news of pardon; gives faith to the penitent; attests the believer's adoption; renews his nature; helps his infirmities in prayer; assists in the discharge of every duty; and eminently dwells in the heart as the Comforter. He finishes his work by raising up the bodies of the children of God at the last day; for the Lord shall 'quicken your mortal body, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.'

"We proceed,

"II. To notice the prayer of the psalmist, grounded on these encouraging views of the agency and character of the Lord the Spirit: 'Lead me into the land of uprightness;' that is, into a settled and confirmed state of religious experience.

"The man described in this psalm is wandering as in a wilderness, full of mazes and dangers; he sees this good land afar off, and prays for the guidance of the good Spirit, that he may find and enter into it.

"In this good land the blessing of pardon is enjoyed; power over all sin is attained; the happy believer, who has entered into it, walks in uprightness of intention, in direct paths, and by a right rule. Here he enjoys an ample supply of all his wants; is blessed with the society of those who are partakers of like precious faith; and sees before him the blessed prospect of eternal life."

Having given a most glowing description of the goodly land, in which the established Christian dwells, in an application of uncommon pathos and power, Mr. Watson encouraged his hearers to "go up at once and possess it." He enlarged, with even more than his usual copiousness and energy, upon the essential and exuberant goodness of that Spirit for whose guidance the psalmist prayed; and described him as ready to bring every one present into this state of settled purity and happiness. The influence which attended this discourse was very powerful; and deep and salutary were the impressions which were made upon many minds as to the nature and value of

true religion, and its attainableness under the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit.

Thus ended the public ministry of this distinguished servant of the Lord Jesus, upon whose word multitudes had long been accustomed to attend with mingled wonder and delight. He was in a state of great suffering when the service concluded; and Mr. Henry Clarke, whose house was near the chapel, pressed him to stay and dine, or at least to take some refreshment, before he attempted to return to Myddleton-square; but he was desirous to reach home without delay, and therefore declined the kind invitation of his friend. It was proposed that a coach should be fetched to the chapel, to take him home; but he chose rather to walk to the New-road, where he obtained a conveyance. As the congregation retired, many an individual lingered to gaze upon the wasted form of their esteemed pastor; and not a few "sorrowed most of all" for the probability that "they should see his face no more."

A few days after this effort, and while his health still remained unimproved, Mr. Watson's feelings were again lacerated by the sudden and unexpected death of the Rev. John James, one of his esteemed colleagues in the missionary secretaryship, and a man for whom he had long cherished a very sincere and affectionate friendship. On Sunday morning, November 4th, Mr. James appeared in his usual health; and at family worship selected the hymn beginning,—

"Tremendous God, with humble fear;"

in which are the following impressive stanzas:—

"Submissive to thy just decree,
We all shall soon from earth remove;
But when thou sendest, Lord, for me,
O let the messenger be love!

"Whisper thy love into my heart,
Warn me of my approaching end;
And then I joyfully depart,
And then I to thy arms ascend."

In the evening he preached in the City-Road chapel, when he betrayed signs of langour, and his mind seemed to be occasionally confused. His friends were alarmed, and conveyed him home in a coach. During the night he was seized with apoplexy, which was quickly followed by paralysis. He remained in a state of stupor, deprived of the power of speech, till the following Tuesday, when he yielded up his soul to God. Mr. James was a man of great zeal and energy, of strong and manly sense, and of a frank and generous disposition. He had attended Mr. Watson's ministry in Liverpool when very young, and derived considerable advantage from it; and for many years he and Mr. Watson had lived in habits of intimacy and mutual confidence. On the day after Mr. James's death, the missionary committee assembled, and passed the following resolutions, which were drawn up by Mr. Watson:—

"That the committee are deeply impressed with the mournful tidings now communicated, and bow with humility before God, in acknowledgment of his sovereignty as the Arbiter of life and death; and, under a deep sense of human frailty, would feel this bereavement

of one of their most active coadjutors, in the prime of life, as calling upon them to a renewed dedication of themselves to God in the service of his Church, that, whenever they are summoned, they may be found watching.

"That the services of the late Mr. James, for upward of five years, as one of the general secretaries, his zealous application to the duties of his office, the united urbanity and firmness which marked his public conduct, the able and earnest manner in which he pleaded the cause of our missions in various parts of the kingdom, and the judgment and eloquence which in him were consecrated to this sacred cause, have a powerful claim upon the grateful remembrance of the committee, as having, in no small degree, contributed to the prosperity and growth of the society, and greatly tended, by consequence, to promote the cause of our Redeemer in the world.

"That this affectionate memorial of the committee's respect for the character and services of Mr. James be entered on the minutes, and also printed in the missionary notices."

When Mr. James was thus suddenly removed, leaving an afflicted widow and six children, most of whom were very young, Mr. Watson's friends became seriously alarmed for him, lest the shock should be too powerful for him in his suffering and exhausted state; and the writer of these memoirs availed himself of the earliest opportunity of conversing with him on the subject, and for the purpose of soothing his mind. "Mr. Watson," said he, "we must not suffer our minds to sink under these distressing bereavements. I hope you do not indulge such a sorrow as will be injurious to your health." "O no!" he replied; "I have such a conviction of the special agency of God's providence in all these things as preserves my mind in perfect tranquillity." Yet it was evident that, while "he thought as a sage" and as a Christian, "he felt as a man." He rested in the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, who numbers the very hairs upon the heads of his servants; and, as the happy result of this confidence, he possessed his soul in patience, and bowed with reverent submission to the Divine will; but at the same time his heart bled for the widow and the orphan, and because he had one friend less on earth. The solemnities of death and eternity now engaged his constant attention.

Mr. James's funeral took place on Saturday, the 10th of November; but Mr. Watson was too ill to pay the last mark of respect for his lamented colleague, by following his remains to the grave. He began to consider his own recovery hopeless, as he intimates in his letter to Mr. Blaine; and he was apprehensive that his life was nearer its close than he had anticipated. When he entered upon his labours as an expositor of Scripture, as already stated, he began with the Epistle to the Romans; and it had been his special desire to present to the Church of God what he believed to be the legitimate meaning of that portion of the New Testament, and of the Epistle to the Hebrews. He had now proceeded as far as the twelfth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel; and he was persuaded, from increasing weakness and suffering, that he should not be able to complete his design, in writing an exposition of the whole of the New Testament. He therefore passed over the remaining chapters of St. Luke, St. John's Gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles, and entered, without delay, upon the Epistle to the Romans;

but when he had reached the third chapter of that book, his strength failed, and he was compelled to desist from all farther attempts to explain those sacred oracles, which for so many years were his delight and study. The Christian doctrine of the atonement had been through life one of the most prominent subjects of his ministry; it was the basis of all his hope and confidence toward God; it supplied in his mind the principal motives to personal piety, and to ministerial and missionary exertion; and it is worthy of remark, that the last effort he ever made in theological composition was his admirable note upon Rom. iii, 22, 23, intended to explain the method of a sinner's justification before God, through faith in the sacrificial blood of Christ. "Every thing," says he, "relative to the sacrifice of Christ bears the most public character. He was offered up before the world; the doctrine of his cross forms the great subject of the evangelical ministry; it is that which is commanded to be preached, published, proclaimed to every creature; while the institution of the Church, which is not a secret society, but 'a city set on a hill,' holds up to the faith and trust of men, from age to age, that grand atonement by which alone the guilty are reconciled to God."

With the note of which this extract is a part, Mr. Watson concluded his labours as a theological writer; and the efficacy of the atonement, which he here so forcibly inculcates, he happily realized during the few remaining weeks of his suffering life. From this time his strength rapidly declined, and the pain which he often endured was frightful and overwhelming. Mr. Hunter, of Islington, who attended him with the most affectionate assiduity, suggested that one or more physicians should be consulted, as no means which had been hitherto tried were effectual in arresting the progress of the disease. Mr. Watson had the fullest confidence in the judgment of his friend, and believed that if Mr. Hunter could do nothing more for him, the case was hopeless; yet for the satisfaction of his family, and of other parties who were interested in the continuance of his life, he consented to the proposal, and Dr. Farre was requested to visit him. At first, considerable hope was held out, and entertained; but the disease remained in undiminished power. Its precise nature could not be ascertained; and it was afterward found to be such as no medicine could possibly reach. His case now became peculiarly distressing. He had, indeed, intervals of comparative ease; but his paroxysms of pain were increasingly severe.—They sometimes rose to agony; and continued, with scarcely any abatement, for twelve or fourteen hours together. Such, however, was the energy of his mind, strengthened and sustained by the truth and grace of his almighty Saviour, that his patience and self possession never forsook him. "I have seen him," says Mr. Hunter, "in such a state of suffering, that nature could not have endured the slightest augmentation of his pain, but must have fainted under the pressure; and his cry was, not so much that the chastisement might be withdrawn, as that it might be overruled to the improvement of his piety. 'Let it be sanctified,' was his constant prayer: 'O God, let it be sanctified!'"

While Mr. Watson was in this state of affliction, waiting for the final summons, the great measure of negro emancipation was approaching its crisis. Committees of the two houses of parliament had been previously appointed to inquire into the subject, and each of them pro

duced such a body of evidence as demonstrated that a system which generated evils, both physical and moral, of such fearful magnitude, ought not to be continued a day longer than the time at which it could be terminated with safety to the parties. At the late elections only eleven proprietors of slaves had been returned as members of the house of commons; a large proportion of the candidates owed their election to the pledges which they gave to their constituents, that they would vote for abolition; several members of the house of peers were so affected by the evidence adduced, that they avowed their determination to assist in putting an end to negro slavery; the nation in general was roused, and especially the religious part of the community, by the persecutions and other outrages in Jamaica, and by the intelligence which the Anti-Slavery Society had diffused; so that his majesty's government, supported by parliament and the public voice, was ready to co-operate with those benevolent statesmen who had long advocated the cause of the negro, to arrange a plan for the extinction of this abomination. In this hopeful state of things Mr. Buxton, whose zeal in this cause of righteousness can never be forgotten by the friends of humanity and religion, addressed a letter to Mr. Watson, requesting his advice as to the plan to be adopted. The mind of this dying friend of the negro race retained all its energy; and though his "right hand" had for some time "forgotten its cunning," his generous spirit was so roused, that he immediately called for his desk, and wrote the subjoined epistle. The writing was so feeble and tremulous, that it was a matter of some difficulty to decipher the whole; but with Mr. Watson's assistance it was transcribed and forwarded to Mr. Buxton, whose kind permission has been given for its publication.

To Thomas Fowell Buxton, Esq., M. P.

December, 1832.

Dear Sir,—I am happy that at length you are addressing yourself to a plan for the emancipation of the negroes; the very thing we have for some time wanted, and in the absence of which the parties have been left to fight very much in the dark, to the injury of a good cause.

Your letter will give occasion to me to make several observations; and as you are a frank man, I shall speak frankly.

I am no advocate for immediate emancipation in the strict sense; and have always thought that fixing a not distant time for the extinction of slavery would of necessity bring the planters themselves into preparatory measures, with zeal and sincerity, not excluding religious instruction. But extinguishing the master's property in the slave at once, and then securing the labour of the slaves to the estate for a short term of years, is in substance the same thing; and with suitable police regulations is, no doubt, practicable. My principle is to *do right*, and to do it advisedly; and I shall not therefore be thought enthusiastic, I hope, when I say, that *all* the smaller colonies where missions have been longest in operation, are already sufficiently ripe for such a change, great as it will be. Even some parishes in Jamaica might be so dealt with, without danger. The greater part of Jamaica has been left without moral influence; and so have the slaves generally in Barbadoes; and not much has been done by missions in Trinidad. My remarks here do not comprehend these; but as to the greater number

of the islands, Christian instruction has already created such a body of intelligent and well-disposed negroes, that, through their ministers, whom they will believe, they are quite capable of being made to comprehend and feel the importance and advantage of a plan of prospective emancipation with its proper guards and limitation; and, through the religious slaves, all the rest might be rightly informed and influenced on the subject. We can fully depend upon the peaceable, nay, thankful, submission of the slave members of our societies to such an arrangement as will afford them reasonable hope; and the whole slave population would be kept in peace by their means, provided the missionaries were allowed without fear to explain matters fully to them, and that the plan were such in equity, as they could in their preaching and private exhortations bind upon their consciences.

I take much of what is said of the necessity of religious preparation to be very fallacious. It is founded, 1. In ignorance of what has been effected by missions. 2. In prejudice. The good has been chiefly done by sectaries; and therefore a truly orthodox statesman must turn away with contempt from it. And, worst of all, it has been done chiefly by us; and we, you know, are *emphatically* fools and fanatics. 3. It arises from a want of acquaintance with the lower classes, and consequently with the fact which has been so often exhibited in this country in times of excitement,—the mighty influence of a few pious people in the lower walks of life upon the many. This is eminently so among the negroes: the influence of the religious slaves upon the others is remarkably great. The latter feel their inferiority in every respect. 4. The effect of Christianity upon the slave population has been unjustly depreciated by the advocates of abolition, though with the good design of strengthening their argument. My firm belief is, that you may proceed to work as soon as you please with a liberal and prudent plan of emancipation, and fear no tumults in the majority of the colonies; and as for Barbadoes, and those parts of Jamaica which have been most neglected, a strong police, and a regulation forbidding the use of arms, might prove sufficient, if care were taken to make the slaves understand the real nature of the measure.

But in another view, the communication of education and religious instruction, on a more extended scale, is essential to the developement of the effects you wish. You will have no insurrections *now*, if you proceed prudently, and take the missionaries, the pious and zealous part of the clergy, and the religious slaves, with you. What has been effected by the quiet, persevering labours of good and despised men has saved you from this result. But that the liberated slaves will become industrious, moral, and orderly,—that they will so improve their civil condition, as to exhibit a cheering and instructive example of the benefit of the change,—cannot be expected without the application of moral means; and to this larger view of the value of education and religion, too much importance cannot be attached. Here I fully agree with those who think much more must be done in the application of moral means.

Your letter states that you contemplate a system of religious instruction upon a scale more extensive and more efficient than any which has hitherto been established in any part of the globe, by any missionary bodies. The extent of it ought to be commensurate with the want;

that is sufficiently clear. But if you project some new plan, I fear you will find that it is not for you, a few statesmen, wise as you are, to devise efficient schemes of religious instruction. Where are your agents? It is not enough for you to send out schoolmasters and schoolmistresses of decent character, even if you can get them; (which I doubt in any number;) nor religious instructers for the slaves, who shall be able to put in motion the external apparatus of religion. Can you find men whose hearts God has touched; who will go to the negroes with the fulness of sympathy and compassion for their ignorance and vices, and endeavour to bring them into a state of light and salvation, and can be content with nothing lower? men who are anxious to win souls, and will labour to the waste of life and health to effect this? These are the only men that get influence with the negroes; and this the secret of their attachment to missionaries. Now, if you can command a sufficient number of these, well; but if not, you will cheat yourselves and the public; you will fill the colonies with idle, powerless men; and from all such, as zealous missionaries increase, they will draw away the people and leave them, as the worldly catechists and others in many places are now left, with scarcely any occupation but that of securing their salaries; yet many years will be lost, and the moral effect be suspended. I told you I should speak frankly, and I am giving you proof of it; but pardon me. Dismiss all plans of yours and your brother statesmen for *providing* religious instruction for the slaves, and take the simple mode of availing yourselves of what God has provided for you, by affording encouragement to the zeal and piety of those who will voluntarily carry on that work, by building them places of worship, spread over the islands, and houses for the missionaries and schoolmasters, and by promoting liberal subscriptions to the different societies.

As to schools, they also, to be morally efficient, must be connected with religious institutions. Infant schools and Sunday schools are those best adapted, at present, to the West Indies: the former, because the children will be employed at an early age; the latter, because they are, when well conducted, directly religious; and their teachers, being in most instances persons of serious habits, exercise a good influence upon the minds of the children.

I now come to what respects ourselves; and I begin by disavowing all sectarian feelings. Much as I have been interested in our West Indian missions, and much of my life as I have given to promote them, if I saw the religious wants of the negro population efficiently provided for, it would give me not the least concern if no additional missionary of ours was sent there; for we have splendid openings of usefulness in South Africa, the South Sea, and other quarters. If we were strongly actuated, therefore, by the desire to extend ourselves as a sect, we could enlarge our borders indefinitely; and even as to the West Indies, were they filled with clergy and others, it would make little difference to us; we should still go through those islands "in the length of them, and in the breadth of them;" and we have never yet, thank God, failed of success in the best sense. In answering your questions, therefore, in the best manner I can, I am neither under the influence of sectarian motives, nor under the temptation to it.

About ten years ago we had an offer of liberal support from his

majesty's government, if we would send out as many missionaries to the West Indies as would instruct the slave population; and by desire of Lord Bathurst I had a long conversation with Mr. Wilmot Horton on the subject. We differed on this point: government wished to place our missionaries under the *control* of the parish clergy; while we, though perfectly willing to co-operate with them in the most friendly spirit, insisted upon being left at perfect liberty to pursue our own plans, which, from an experience of near forty years, we had found to be efficient. Thus the matter broke off; and the West Indies were then erected into bishopricks. I must, in fairness, therefore say, that now, as then, we can be parties to no arrangement whatever, which does not leave us to go on according to our own established plans. After this preliminary remark I take your questions in order.

"1. Will your society concur in the views here stated?"

Answer. In all the views as to the importance of promoting education and religious instruction among the negroes we most heartily concur; and our society will zealously co-operate.

"2. Would they be disposed to send out a strong missionary force to the West Indies?"

Answer. Our principle is to increase the number of our missionaries every where, as our funds will allow, and prospects of usefulness call for them; and we have felt ourselves always peculiarly bound to foster our missions in the West India colonies. To co-operate with a great plan for the extinction of slavery is an additional motive of the most influential kind; so that we might probably be disposed to suspend for a time the increase of missionaries in other quarters in order to enlarge the number there. We could send out perhaps about twenty missionaries every year; and, by an effort, we might probably the first year send out thirty; including a due proportion of men of some experience, as well as approved candidates whom we keep in reserve. But our fund cannot send out a single additional missionary, unless it is increased by subscriptions, or other means.

"3. Would they take into consideration the possibility of establishing a missionary college or school in the West Indies for the purpose of training persons of colour as instructers to the negroes?"

Answer. We have an institution of this kind in Ceylon for training both catechists and native missionaries, which has been very useful. A college is building by our people in Upper Canada; and we should be glad to see one for the West Indies. We might, however, prefer to bring young men who may be employed as missionaries over to this country, and train them with our own candidates. But this may be matter of future consideration. Very proper persons may be found in the colonies, though at present not in any considerable number; all subordinate offices of religious instruction by people of colour having been greatly discouraged by the prejudices of caste. Those active engagements, which are schools, in which we train up our young men at home to useful exertion, and the improvement of their talents, by exercising them, have been forbidden in the West Indies, or very imperfectly put into operation. Still, under every discouragement, we have had some very valuable native missionaries in the West Indies. Two are now living; one a full black; a man of reading, learning, and eloquence: the other, a mulatto, of a strong mind, and a very respecta-

ble missionary. We have also under consideration at present the case of two other native candidates; one a full black, whose letters do him great credit; and another a brown, who has long and creditably acted as a catechist.

"4. Is it your opinion that not only the members of your societies, but the public at large, would liberally co-operate in effecting the object we have in view?"

ANSWER. I do not think that "the public" would. For I have not found that the astonishing excitement has brought any more money of consequence into our funds, or those of other societies who take a part in this work, even from the professed zealous anti-slavery people. There has been little care manifested about the *souls* of the negroes; little disposition shown to render charities to the mind commensurate with those to the body; plenty of good speeches and plaudits; few additional guineas to missionary funds. We have not generally learned to prefer the common Christianity to our own form, nor to rejoice in good done by those "who follow not with us." As to the religious public therefore I have but small hopes: and if a considerable amount of subscriptions were offered under the influence of the impression produced by the carrying a great plan into effect, it would not last long; and any enterprises undertaken by missionary societies, in dependence upon that, would embarrass them. The expenses they would incur would be permanent. The commensurate support, if even realized for one year, would prove evanescent. I hope that all missionary societies may expect a gradual improvement of their funds; but that will be slowly progressive, and make no provision for a comprehensive and rapid enlargement of their exertions. As to our own societies, they are at their full stretch. Our fund is raised chiefly from ourselves; and the hostility to missions produced throughout the West Indies, excited by the agitation of the slavery question, has dried up almost entirely all the support we used to derive from the planters and respectable whites in the colonies. Whether we shall be able, therefore, to keep up the number of our missions in the West Indies is doubtful. If we do, it will require all the liberality of our own people to enable us to maintain our present stand; so completely are our West India missions shaken, and so greatly have their local resources failed, in consequence of the decided part we have taken against slavery. I know well enough where your difficulty will press. You cannot reach the case of the negroes without the missionary societies; and government may not be disposed directly to give any support except to the Church; and the Church in the West Indies has little influence with the negroes, and is not likely to have, except where the clergy are zealous, of which there are, I lament to say, few examples. Voluntary aid cannot, as I have said, be depended upon; and here your plan will be embarrassed. Yet in Upper Canada all the sects are aided by government grants, arising out of the funds of the colony. And we were certainly offered support by Earl Bathurst, as above stated; so that it would not be new for government to afford us help. Should any thing of that kind at length be thought of in the West Indies, the most effectual manner in which missions could be aided, would be the building of stone or brick chapels and houses for the ministers, to be settled on trust; and then leave us to work our way. For if these chapels were in part

pewed, yet leaving ample space for the poor, the letting of sittings at a moderate rate is practicable; and, were the chapels spacious, would go a considerable way to provide for the expense of supplying them. But here I give you my opinion, not my wishes; for we ask nothing of government but protection; but if we are to do any thing for them, they must help us, because we already expend all that we raise, or can raise, except as our missionary fund may gradually improve by the increase of our own societies, and the liberality of others.

I have answered to the best of my power, and shall be glad to explain any thing in which I have been obscure, or to reply to any other questions.

Just after Mr. Watson had finished this letter, his friend Mr. Mason called to see him; and as they had been associated together some years before as secretaries to the Wesleyan missions, they conversed freely on the subject to which it relates; and Mr. Watson remarked, with considerable feeling, "I am now a dying man; but it is a privilege to have lived to see the time when the day of liberty begins to dawn upon those poor oppressed people in the West Indies."

It will be observed, that in this important document Mr. Watson distinctly recognizes the leading principles which characterize the measure of emancipation that was adopted a few months afterward by the British parliament. He required that a period should be fixed when slavery should cease; that the negro might look forward with confidence and hope to the time when the chains should fall from his hands, and he should enjoy the rights of humanity; and that the planters should have some motive to concur in such measures of amelioration as might be deemed necessary as preparatory to universal emancipation. Nor does he contend that the pecuniary loss connected with this measure should fall exclusively upon the slave holder, considering that the iniquitous system had been carried on under the sanction of the British nation; which was therefore bound to bear its share of the loss. Mr. Wilberforce was spared till the parliament had pledged itself to abolish colonial slavery, and had fixed the amount of sacrifice to be made by the country in carrying this measure into practical effect; and just before he died he is reported to have said, "Have I lived to see the day when the people of England will advance the sum of twenty millions to get rid of slavery!" Such was the fact; and a more striking instance of the power of Christian principle was perhaps never exhibited in the history of the world. A great and powerful nation, from its own sense of justice, to free itself from a hateful system of oppression, sanctioned by long usage, resolves to pay a sum of money greater in amount than some nations are able to raise under any circumstances whatever. What a lesson to the whole civilized world! The ultimate consequences of this act it is impossible to foresee; but it may be confidently expected to lead to the general abandonment of slavery, at least on the part of America and the European states. In the meanwhile, the negroes in the West India Islands are at full liberty to attend the house of God, and to avail themselves of the means of evangelical instruction. The hateful distinction of caste, founded upon the complexion of the skin, may be expected soon to disappear in a country where all are free, and the blacks and people of colour form

so large a majority. Mr. Watson saw this state of things in distant prospect, and laboured most assiduously to hasten its consummation; but he was not spared to join in the pure and hallowed triumph of that noble band of philanthropic men with whom he had been associated in this work of humanity and religion, when the act of emancipation passed the legislature, and received the royal signature. Mr. Bunting first called upon the Methodist body to assert the negro's right to liberty, by his strong and seasonable papers on the subject in the Wesleyan Magazine; but to the exertions of no individual are the negroes so much indebted as to those of Mr. Macaulay, who for years never ceased to press upon the public conscience the guilt and misery of colonial slavery. Richard Matthews, Esq., a personal friend of Mr. Watson, was the first secretary to the Anti-Slavery Society; and, till the measure of emancipation was carried, a most efficient and useful member of the committee.

Mr. Watson was now confined to his sick room; life was ebbing out apace; and the time was come that he must die. Through the greater part of his life he had cherished the conviction, that Christianity is adapted to all the wants of man's intellectual and moral nature; this conviction had given energy to his ministry, and had supplied the principal motive to his extraordinay exertions in the mission cause; and now his religious principles were to be put to the severest test. He had a "great fight of affliction" to endure, and to resign his life in obedience to the call of God. In what manner he sustained the fiery conflict, and realized the power of Christianity, will best appear from the accounts supplied by friends who visited him, and especially by members of his own family who attended him night and day.

The following notices are given by Mrs. Bulmer, who had long enjoyed his friendship. A few months before he had, at her request, read her admirable poem, "Messiah's Kingdom," in manuscript; and strongly advised its publication, proposing, at the same time, to read the proof sheets as the work passed through the press, and suggest any alterations he might deem necessary. At the time of his death the whole had been nearly printed off under his friendly review.

The conviction I had long felt, (says this excellent and gifted lady) under the painfully deepening impression that Mr. Watson's health was sensibly declining, was considerably increased from observing in his appearance a great change for the worse, in a friendly call which he made on me, one day in the latter end of November. Our interview was but a short one, yet it was marked with a hallowed character. "Pain," said he, "is a great blessing: it tends to detach our thoughts and affections from the world, and to concentrate them on things eternal. I feel it to be so great a blessing, that I cannot pray for its removal. Pain, sorrow, sickness, death,—its time, circumstances, and manner,—are all in the covenant. How much is contained in those words: 'Nothing shall by any means harm you!'" The emphasis of feeling and expression which he threw into these sentences greatly affected me. Although not unused to the holy tenor of his conversation in these occasional visits, yet there was a peculiarity in his manner then, that spoke the solemn lesson to my heart; and

something seemed to whisper to me, that such special opportunities of instruction would not be very long continued.

The last time at which I was privileged with a visit from him, was the evening of November 25th: he said, "Life, when a little protracted, leaves us comparatively alone in the world. Our friends depart successively, and we feel solitary and pensive." He had touched a string with which my mind was in unison; and it could not but respond to his plaintive tones. He took up then a higher key, and said, "We must not dwell exclusively on the darker scene; but in the exercise of faith, endeavour to realize the felicity of our departed friends, and to be in spirit associated with them, in that world of light and glory where they now dwell. Perhaps we do not derive the consolation which it is our privilege to do, from Christian hope." His solemn prayer, in the family devotion of that memorable evening, deeply impressed my heart; especially when he prayed, that, should we never again on earth be associated thus in holy worship, we might all meet in our Father's house above.

My next interview with him was nearly a month after this time; I believe on the 18th of December. He was then increasingly ill, and looked much emaciated; but he was cheerful, as usual, and the frame of his mind deeply spiritual and heavenly. He spoke with great calmness of the probable issue of his affliction; and added, "I have not now to learn, for the first time, that all is right and best, and, as it should be, under the Divine disposal,—whether restoration to health shall be vouchsafed to me, for farther usefulness, or whether the continuance of severe pain shall shortly terminate my sufferings by death." He then discoursed delightfully on the subject of a special Providence, and on the many opportunities he had enjoyed of testing the truth of that doctrine in his personal experience. "God," said he, "in the wise economy of his government has provided for the answer of prayer." He instanced such answers given to himself, especially as connected with his ministerial labours, when strength and refreshment had been remarkably vouchsafed to him in the hour of need, appealing, at the same time, to Mrs. Watson for the confirmation of his statements on this interesting point. My last solemn interview with Mr. Watson was on Thursday, December 27th. I was then admitted to see him for a short time, after he had endured that paroxysm of awful suffering which had brought him to the verge of the grave. Never shall I forget the expression of his countenance, when I first met the glance of his languid and almost tearful eye. It was a look of ineffable kindness and affection; and seemed as if it could be second only to that with which I trust we shall again regard each other in a sinless and unsuffering world. It dissolved my soul in grief. I felt assured that his stay among us could not be long, and the idea of his removal inflicted a poignant pang. His frame bore the impress of the agony he had endured. But his spirit seemed pavilioned in the very Divine presence. He said he "felt the sustaining power of God," and discoursed, for a short time, and with frequent intermissions through great debility, on that most delightful topic, peculiarly suggested by the season, "They shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us." "Yes," said he, "God with us,—with us all, —with each of us,—with us at all times,—under all circumstances;

especially with us in deep sympathy with all our sorrows, dangers, and sufferings." He was evidently giving utterance to sentiments, the truth of which he was then powerfully realizing in his own experience. Faith triumphed over dissolving nature, and the Rock of Ages he felt to be the strength of his failing heart:—our parting is indelibly written on mine. With a voice faltering through irrepressible emotion, he expressed a hope that our next meeting might be under more favourable circumstances, and added, "If not,—if not,—may we have a happier meeting in heaven!"

The Rev. John Beecham, Mr. Watson's esteemed colleague in the secretaryship to the Wesleyan Missionary Society, enjoyed his confidence and affection in a high degree, and was in daily habits of intercourse with him during the season of his last affliction. He gives the following particulars:—

Several months before his death, Mr. Watson's declining state of health began to awaken serious apprehensions in his own mind, and to lead him to regard death as at no very great distance. He often adverted to this subject; but I recollect very distinctly a conversation I had with him about the middle of autumn, in which he dwelt on his situation and prospects with much feeling. He observed, it seemed hard to have to die at a time of life which might be regarded as the palmy state of man, and when, from the greater maturity of his judgment, and his more extensive experience, he felt as though he could do more for the Church than he ever had done; "but," added he, "if I am cut short, it will not be by chance. Life and death are at the disposal of an infinitely wise and good Being, and all will be right."

After he had suffered for some weeks from those periodical attacks of pain, to which he became subject in the latter stage of the complaint, he had a paroxysm, the violence and duration of which so prostrated his remaining strength, that it was feared he could scarcely survive another such attack. On the morning of Sunday, December 23d, 1832, on my calling to see him, he told me he feared he might have a relapse, as he had several unfavourable symptoms. His apprehensions were realized; and he passed the following night in great pain. On my seeing him again, he said to me, "All prospect of my recovery is gone. This return of pain proves, that the cause of my affliction remains. I have no hope now. There is no ground of rational hope left. Nothing now remains for me but to address myself to the great work of preparing to suffer and die." It was no common privilege to have the opportunity of witnessing a mind of such an order thus coolly essaying to grapple with the awful realities of death and eternity; and the scene was invested with deeper interest to me, from my recollection of his remarks on a recent providential dispensation, (the death of the late Rev. John James,) very affecting to us both. On that occasion he observed, with great emotion, that it required the loftiest exercise of faith to keep firm hold of the doctrine of a future state, when we thus saw man struck down, and triumphed over, and humiliated by death.

On the morning of Christmas day, I found him again so free from pain, that he could converse without difficulty. I was no sooner seated by him, than he began: "Well, you see we are at length

thrown back on those great principles which we preach: 'Life is yours;' 'death is yours;' 'things present;' 'things to come;' 'all things work together for good to them that love God.' Now, here are two points: first, Are these things so? and, ——— have you an interest in them?" Having paused, as if in solemn consideration of these questions, he then said, with strong feeling, "Yes, these things are so; these principles are true; and, blessed be God, I have an interest in them; but it is all through the blessed Spirit." After an interval of a few moments he exclaimed, "What a light was that! What a day, when the blessed Spirit first struck the light of heaven into our dark minds!"—and then went on to enlarge on our obligations to the Spirit of God for our religious illumination and enjoyment, showing that the impotent, depraved mind of man could have no religious experience whatever, were it not for that Divine Agent. On my remarking, that it was a glorious reward for the faithful minister of Christ, in the season of deep affliction and suffering, to prove, as he did, the reality and consoling power of the great truths he had spent his life in maintaining and enforcing, he replied, with emphasis, "Yes, a minister has higher enjoyments and privileges than Christians in general; but he is exposed to greater temptation. His is an awful responsibility; and greater is the guilt of any unfaithfulness in him. I feel these things to be so." He then dwelt on his own unworthiness, and the abasing sense he felt of the worthlessness of his very best performances, and said his only hope, his only refuge, was in the pure atonement of Christ. He proceeded to enlarge on the sufficiency of that atonement; and showed what an infinite mercy it is that we have such a resource, and that we know what use to make of it. Then, placing his attenuated hands together, and looking up to heaven, with his eyes partly closed, while his quivering lip marked the deep feeling of his soul, he quoted the following lines:—

"His offering pure we call to mind,
There on the golden altar laid,
Whose Godhead with the manhood join'd
For every soul atonement made;
And have whate'er we ask of God,
Through faith in that all-saving blood."

Then pausing, and looking, for a few moments, unutterable things, he added, with uncommon pathos,—

"I the chief of sinners am;
But Jesus died for me."

It was the following morning, if I remember right, that he formally gave up all public business. He had told me, some days before, that he wanted to talk with me on a few points, as soon as he was able; and being comparatively easy that day when I called on him, he laid on the table a small portfolio, in which he kept papers relating to the missions; and, opening it, showed me what he had been writing in reference to matters which we had previously deliberated on; telling me I must now take up those subjects where he had broken off, and must finish them. After farther conversation, on my preparing to leave him, I gathered up only the papers we had been examining; when, taking them out of my hand, he placed them with the others in the portfolio;

and, folding it up, said, "Here, take all together. If I get better, you know, I can take it back again; and, if not, I must leave you, and you must leave me."

On a subsequent day, as I sat alone with him, he told me that his arrangements for death were now nearly completed; and talked with me about destroying his useless papers, and respecting the manuscripts he should leave behind, and on his private affairs in general, with a calmness and composure which almost made me forget that I was conversing with one who regarded himself as a dying man. And this cool fortitude was not an occasional effort of the mind. In this respect, I invariably found him the same. His dying was his common topic; and he would dwell on it with a composedness which strikingly indicated that all was right within. And it is worthy of remark, that no favourable change which his case might occasionally present, ever diverted him, as far as my observation went, from the great work of preparing for death. For a week before he evidently changed for death, the worst symptoms of his case so far abated as to awaken some hopes again respecting him; and he said to me one day, "I may, it is possible I may, rally so far as to be able to advise with you again.—But," added he, looking up, while the tears glistened in his eyes, "if not, blessed be thy name, I am resigned to thy will."

On my incidentally mentioning to him that his friends at a certain place had agreed to have a meeting for prayer in his behalf, he leaned forward, and, covering his face with his hand, he wept, and said, "What am I, that I should have an interest in the prayers of so many good people!" He repeatedly observed to me, during the latter part of his illness, that were he to be raised again, he believed it would be chiefly in answer to prayer; and to this cause he said he must greatly attribute it, that his sufferings were so much mitigated, and that such a worm as he should enjoy so much of the Divine presence and goodness in his affliction.

The morning of the last Sabbath of his life but one, and the very last on which he could sit up and converse, was a gracious season to him. As I sat alone with him, I made an observation respecting the Sabbath; on which he exclaimed, "Blessed day of rest!"—and then dwelt on the hallowed enjoyments of the Sabbath, and its rich provision for the spiritual wants of man. After we had spent some time in prayer, during which the Divine goodness appeared to overshadow us in an indescribable manner, I, on parting, said to him, "May the Lord of the Sabbath be with you!"—to which he responded, with deep fervour, "Amen, Amen!" He had a high sense of the importance of the sabbatic institution, for advancing the cause of religion; and has more than once said to me, with great feeling, when I have called upon him on the Lord's day, and found him unable to stir out, "Another blessed Sabbath must, in regard of public worship, be a blank to me."

On the last day upon which he was able to discourse at length, I sat with him a considerable time, and had full proof that he remained in the same elevated and heavenly frame of mind which he had manifested throughout his affliction. Such dignity, united with such deep humility; such intellectual strength and vigour, attended with so much child-like simplicity; such patience under intense suffering; and, in the intervals of pain, such indications of ineffable intercourse with God,

and such outbeamings of hallowed joy,—have been but rarely witnessed, I conceive, in any dying saint.

The Rev. George Marsden, who was then stationed in London, and who had been intimate with Mr. Watson for many years, thus speaks of him:—

I had two interviews with Mr. Watson, during his last affliction.—At the first, after a few expressions relative to his illness, and the extreme pain he had endured, he almost immediately entered on the pleasing subject of Christ crucified. He dwelt for some time on its infinite importance, as the only foundation on which we can rest for pardon, acceptance with God, and the hope of eternal life. He then, in a very impressive manner, spoke of his own unworthiness, and of his firm reliance on the atonement, and repeated, with solemn and deep feeling, those expressive lines:—

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
Into thy hands I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Saviour and my all."

In the course of conversation, he was led to refer to some parts of his past life, and especially to some controversies in which he had taken a decided part; and he then remarked, "I have sincerely endeavoured to do the will of God, though frequently with much defect.—Sometimes, by maintaining what I believed to be right, I have been brought into collision with some of my brethren, and subjected myself to the strife of tongues; but I do love the preachers." He appeared to have very little doubt but that the affliction would terminate in death, and not to have even a lingering wish to live. He said that he had, for some time, a desire to live for a few years longer, that he might accomplish some things which he thought might be useful, if it had been the will of God; "but now," said he, "the very desire of it is taken away." After prayer, I remained with him a few minutes longer, at his request, during which his conversation was of the same exalted and heavenly nature.

My last interview with him was on Saturday, December 29th. His mind appeared to be peculiarly calm and tranquil; and, almost immediately on my going into the room, he entered on spiritual and heavenly subjects. He seemed, as in the former conversation, to be desirous of dwelling on the delightful subject of the atonement, as if his whole soul centred there. He said, "The Methodists have right views of the atonement; and they also know the way of coming to the atonement, and the right use to be made of that important doctrine." After speaking for some time on that point, he began to converse about death, and said that he had now no particular desire either for life or for death. He added, "Dying and death are two distinct things. There is something gloomy and melancholy about dying; whereas death is nothing, but as it opens the way to glory." His views then appeared to be raised to the heavenly world; and, as if contemplating the glory of God, and of the future state, while his soul was humbled in the dust, in the near prospect which he had of entering into the Divine presence, he said, "I seem like a worm, creeping into the glory of God, and coming be-

fore the throne." Such a scene of calm tranquillity, Divine solemnity, and heavenly peace, I scarcely ever before witnessed.

A kind friend and neighbour of Mr. Watson, Mr. William Ince, often visited him during his last illness, and not unfrequently attended him through the night. The following particulars have been supplied by him :—

Taking leave of a friend, who hoped to find him better in the morning, he replied, affectionately, "No; you will not find me better; I feel that death is upon me; but Christ is in my heart. He is mine, and I am his."

Speaking of his call to the ministry, he said, "My dear friend, God called me very early to the work of the ministry. I began to preach before I was fifteen years of age. I never had any doubt but that I was called of God. I always delighted in my work; and I can truly say, in reference to the missions, and in some secular affairs necessarily connected with the ministerial office, I have acted as I thought for the best; but, my dear friend, we are all liable to err; and I doubt not that my motives have been frequently misunderstood. All secular affairs have a deadening tendency; constantly paining one's mind, and doing us injury."

On a Sabbath morning, alluding to the large congregation assembled at St. Mark's Church, opposite to his house, a friend asked, "Would you not like to preach to them?" With glistening eyes, raising himself up in his bed, he exclaimed, with great energy, "Indeed I should."

On another occasion, he said, "O what a state will that be, when *I*, *I* shall be singing hallelujahs to God and the Lamb! when *I* shall be able to love him, and serve him, without the possibility of sinning against him!"—laying great stress on *I*. "O," he continued, "it is sin that keeps us at such a distance from God! What a wonderful scheme is that of redemption by Christ! What a glorious state, when mind shall expand to take in the heights, and breadths, and depths of love Divine! to be able to enter largely into the mysterious wonders of Providence, without this clog of corruption. *I* shall see God; I, I, individually, I myself, a poor worm of the earth, shall see God! How shall I sufficiently praise him!" "A poor worm of the earth," was his constant and familiar expression.

Never did the writer see so much humility and tenderness in a dying chamber; nor will he ever forget the feeling produced in his own mind, during the midnight hours spent so near the verge of heaven. "My blessed Saviour!" "My blessed Jesus!" "How wonderful the plan of redemption by Christ!"—were expressions constantly emanating from his lips. Frequently were the tears seen flowing from his eyes; and he was thankful for every little attention that was paid to him; observing, "I do not deserve it. Why is it that I have so much kindness shown me? You must love me; and I know there is no burden in love." Under the strong impulse of grateful feeling, he often emphatically exclaimed, "God bless you." During the night season the writer observed him very frequently pouring out his soul in prayer. The words were indistinct; but the muscles of his face, and the elevation of his hands, gave sufficient proofs of its fervour; nor did the

writer feel at all disposed to interrupt the intercourse between the saint and his God. The place was holy.

Being refreshed with a little tea, and making inquiries concerning a person who was immersed in the world, and absorbed in its pursuits, he said, "What a pity! living for this world only! Poor man! how I pity him! The world can give no solid satisfaction; and then to have no hope of heaven; no satisfactory resting place, or place of enjoyment suited to its capacities, for the immortal spirit! How dreadful! O how thankful ought we to be for better hopes, and brighter prospects!"

Speaking of his brethren in the ministry, he again and again told the writer of these notices that he loved them dearly. He valued them much, and could not speak too well of them. They had shown him great kindness. This was a frequent topic of conversation with him. In reference to individuals he would say, "He is an affectionate man; I love him." "He is a valued friend; I love him much." "He is a warm and a kind-hearted friend."

Not expecting to be requested to give any account of the last days of Mr. Watson, the writer has forgotten many little incidents which occurred, tending to show the general state of his mind. The prevailing tenor of his discourse was his own sense of unworthiness and helplessness, and of the infinite goodness of God; especially in his merciful provision for the recovery of man from his fallen state by the death of Christ. He appeared to have a settled, calm reliance upon the sacrifice of Christ. "He died for *me*," was his constant language.

The Rev. James Dixon, Mr. Watson's son-in-law, who seldom left his revered relation during the latter part of his life, thus speaks of his spirit and conversation:—

One of the most striking features of spirit manifested by Mr. Watson during his affliction, and on the approach of death, was, a complete resignation to the will of God. By a mind so observant and well furnished, even on physical science, the progress and probable termination of his disease could not be disregarded. Hence, previously to the apprehension of danger by his family, he was observed to manifest, in his conversation and prayers, the evidence that his thoughts were seriously turned to the prospect of an early grave. Many casual expressions respecting the probability of this event threw sadness and gloom over the hearts of those who loved him, while himself was rapidly taking the impress of a deeper piety, and labouring for entire submission to the will of God. He evidently watched the progress of the disease with anxiety, and on every new manifestation, or attack of pain, became more convinced of the probability of a fatal termination. The crisis at length arrived. He observed, that if another paroxysm came on he knew what to expect. The usual time of suffering came, and with it, to his friends, not to himself, the dreaded token. While enduring this fit of excruciating torture, his medical attendant came in; and, as he was leaving the room, Mr. Watson exclaimed, "'Good is the will of the Lord.' Remember, this is my testimony."

This resignation was not the prostration of a wearied and exhausted mind, bending to its destiny from the effect of palsied debility, or an

incapacity any longer to indulge the natural love of life. With him it was a voluntary and religious effort. He sought grace from God, obtained it, and then girt up the loins of his mind to this great Christian duty. From this moment to the period of his decease, neither his spirit nor his language ever betrayed the least want of perfect resignation to his allotted destiny. He remarked, on several occasions, "I could have wished to live a few years longer, to finish some works and designs of usefulness which I contemplated; but the Lord can do without any of us;" adding, "I have often admired the perfect resignation of David, when he said to Zadok, 'Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good to him.' So I say, If the Lord has no delight in me, here am I, let him do to me what seemeth good to him." His constant language was, "I have no wish either to live or to die, but that the will of God may be done;" and, on one occasion, when a member of his family expressed a hope respecting his recovery, he replied, with great sweetness, "It is the anxiety of affection, without any basis of reason to rest upon." Mentioning that his physician had attributed his disease to his habit of stooping to read and write, he remarked, that even if it were so, it was in the order of Divine Providence; "for," said he, "I am fully satisfied with what I have done; but, as to manner, that is another thing. I never engaged in any undertaking," referring particularly to his writings, "without being first convinced that Providence went before me, and called me to the duty."

To those who have been previously acquainted with the true elements of Mr. Watson's character it will not be a matter of surprise that, in circumstances in which the heart discloses its most secret feelings, he displayed the deepest humiliation of spirit. He was never a man to boast. His most intimate friends never heard from him the language of self approval, but often of self reproach. His views of God, of his law, of the obligations of holiness, and of the many and great excellencies necessary to complete the Christian character, were so vivid, and his standard of ministerial and practical duty so elevated, that, amidst the applause of others, and the highest popularity, he sank in lowly shame before God, and, to his intimate friends, was constantly employing the language of sincere self condemnation. This feature of his character came out in its full proportion toward the close of his life. While in health, he was never remarkably communicative on subjects of personal religion; but he now became as simple and open as a child: nor had he been accustomed to give vent to his feelings by tears,—generally endeavouring to repress his emotions; but he now yielded fully to the feelings of his heart, and tears of deep humiliation, intermingled with sacred joy, flowed, when conversing on religious subjects, in copious streams from his eyes.

On one occasion, when visited by a venerable and respected brother minister, who remarked, that it must afford him pleasure and comfort to have been able to state and defend the truth, to preach the Gospel to the edification of thousands, and especially to promote the cause of missions, he said, that he thanked God that he had, he hoped, sincerely promoted the doctrines and discipline of the connection; but added, that

he placed no trust in this. He then made some remarks in justification of the principles and motives by which he had been governed on some disputed points. This conversation took place in the morning; and toward evening he burst into tears, and addressing the person who attended him, exclaimed, "I hope I did not boast to Mr. —— this morning. I thought it right just to state what were my motives on the subjects in question; but God forbid that I should boast. O no," he exclaimed, in the greatest agitation, "I am a poor, low, vile sinner,—'a worm and no man.'"

In remarking on the goodness of God in his early conversion, he observed, "How great was his mercy in taking me up by his grace, and putting me into the ministry, at so early a period, an unworthy, and, in some respects, a most obstinate and refractory sinner!" His favourite expression, when speaking of his state, was to call himself a worm. One night, moved by a sudden impulse, as he lay in bed, he exclaimed, with tears flowing down his languid countenance, "I am a worm, a poor vile worm, not worthy to lift up its head. But then," he added, "the worm is permitted to crawl out of the earth into the garden of the Lord, and there among the flowers and fruits, if it can, to speculate on the palace and ivory throne of Solomon.

'I shall behold his face,
I shall his power adore,
And sing the wonders of his grace
For evermore.'"

It was remarked, "No doubt you will see his face." "Yes," he rejoined, "there is doubt of every thing, but the great, deep, infinite mercy of God,—that is sure."

This deeply-humbled spirit was the element in which he appeared to exist, and prompted him to request the prayers of his friends, and to join most fervently in their supplications. Once, when through great debility he had fallen into the arms of his attendant, and was placed in the bed, he said, "Now kneel down, and offer up prayer to God;" while he responded, as usual, to every petition. On the same day, (being Sunday,) he requested that the Gospel and epistle for the day might be read to him; and afterward said, "Read the *Te Deum:* I am fond of that when I cannot go out on the Sunday, because it seems to unite one in spirit with the whole catholic Church in earth and in heaven."

Innumerable expressions fell from the lips of Mr. Watson, indicative of an entire and exclusive trust in the atonement of Christ for salvation. It appeared as if the Holy Spirit had taken up the blessings of the atonement, so ably exhibited in his preaching and writings, and applied them in fresh and saving efficacy to his mind. Every thing he uttered, on the subject of his own personal state, had a remote or direct reference to this great doctrine. "The atonement," he repeatedly remarked, "is the sinner's short way to God. On this rock I rest, and feel it firm beneath me.

'How firm he proves!
The Rock of Ages never moves;
Yet the sweet streams that from him flow
Attend us all the desert through.'

Yes; I feel that I am on this Rock: in the Lord I have righteousness and strength.

'Fix'd on this ground will I remain,
Though my heart fail and flesh decay;
This anchor shall my soul sustain,
When earth's foundations melt away;
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.'"

On another occasion he exclaimed, "O the precious blood of Christ!" The Epistle to the Romans, he remarked, was very rich, especially the third chapter, in setting forth the atonement: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." "This is the only way of a sinner's approach to God; but through it he is permitted to enter the holy place.

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'"

In speaking of the Divine Being, his mind dwelt almost exclusively on his mercy. The attentions of his friends and medical attendants, his comforts and the smallest acts of kindness, drew from him frequent expressions of gratitude; and he would exclaim, with peculiar feeling and emphasis, "It is all of mercy." When one of his attendants reminded him that the Lord had been very gracious in reviving him a little after a period of speechless lethargy, he adopted his usual watch word, "It is all of mercy." This was the last religious remark he made.

On another occasion he observed, that he wished to keep his mind stayed on God every moment; but in consequence of his weakness and suffering he found it difficult. He wished to have his feelings constantly elevated to the great subjects of religion; but experienced, what he believed many others in similar circumstances often did, a difficulty in realizing consciously the blessings of religion. "All that I can do in my circumstances is to repose on the Divine mercy; and it is of the nature of that mercy to pity the infirmities and sufferings of his children;" and on that mercy he did evidently repose in calm and tranquil confidence. He remarked one day, with great feeling, "There is no rest or satisfaction for the soul but in God. My God: I am permitted to call him mine, though an unworthy sinner. 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: to see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.'"

He exhibited great tenderness and maturity of love in his last affliction. If we judge of the state of this affection toward God by its manifestation toward man, we can have no doubt that it had, by Divine grace, ripened into evangelical perfection. Nothing but feelings of entire tenderness and love were expressed to those around him. Speaking of the preachers, he said he loved the brethren; indeed, there was no class of men for whom he had so great an affection. He added, that he knew his manner had often appeared cold, distant, and reserved;

and this had sometimes been attributed to motives which had no existence. He also said, that we (meaning the preachers) were exposed to peculiar mental temptations from crossings, prejudices, and passions, though of one brotherhood; and that it was necessary to guard against them, and cultivate brotherly love.

By a lively and believing apprehension of the heavenly and invisible state, in combination with an assurance of his interest in Christ, he gained a full and complete victory over the fear of death; and he was not only willing to die, but anticipated it with triumphant joy. When visited by one of his brethren, he remarked, that "the prospect was gloomy as regarded this life, but bright and glowing as regarded another; like the shining of the sun" (it was then shining into the room) "through the mists and gloom of this winter's morning."

A few days before his death, having remained a long time in a state of lethargy, an organ struck up a sweet and plaintive psalm tune under the window. This roused him; and, opening his eyes, he feebly said, "O how sweet! All ought to be harmony on earth; every thing should praise the Lord: it would be so, were it not for sin; and in heaven this will be the case, where sin has no existence."

At one time, being in great pain, he exclaimed, "O how much labour and pain it costs to unroof this house; to take down this tabernacle and tent, and to set the spirit free! And when shall my soul leave this tenement of clay! I long to quit this little abode, gain the wide expanse of the skies, rise to nobler joys, and see God." He then repeated his favourite stanza:—

"I shall behold his face,
I shall his power adore,
And sing the wonders of his grace
For evermore."

In a state of high ecstacy, he burst forth but a short time before he was deprived of the power of connected speech, exclaiming, "We shall see strange sights some day; not different, however, from what we might realize by faith. But it is not this, not the glitter and glory, not the diamond and topaz, no, it is God; he is all and in all!"

During three or four of the last days of his life, Mr. Watson sank into a state of lethargy, appearing almost insensible to those around him, and was nearly incapable of the use of speech. No conversation could be held with him on any subject; but at intervals he seemed to be engaged in devotional exercise. At length, after many hours of difficult respiration, the moment of dissolution approached; and without any apparent pain, or convulsive struggle, his sanctified and happy spirit left its tabernacle of clay, and entered the world of rest and love.

Of Mr. Watson's tender regard for his daughter, Mrs. Dixon, these memoirs bear indubitable witness; and her esteem and affection for him were unbounded. The following interesting particulars are supplied by her:—

It was my father's constant practice, when he and my mother were prevented by sickness from attending the public ordinances on the Sabbath, to read with her in the forenoon the Church service, of which he always expressed himself in the strongest terms of admiration. He would go through the whole service, not omitting the psalms, the

epistle, and collect for the day. My mother read the litany, while my father, devoutly kneeling, responded with the deepest and most fervent devotion. In the evening, he selected a sermon (generally one of Mr. Wesley's) to be read to him; and then, with peculiar feeling and solemnity, repeated one of our hymns, and concluded with prayer. On Sunday, Dec. 16th, a day never to be forgotten, he went through the liturgical service, in the forenoon as above described. In the afternoon, he exclaimed, "Another silent Sabbath! This is the sixth Sunday that I have been prevented by illness from lifting up my voice in the sanctuary!" Then, handing me the hymn book, he said, "Read me some of those blessed hymns: I find them very refreshing." He then selected the following:—"O God, of good the unfathom'd sea;" "Great God, indulge my humble claim;" "With glory clad, with strength arrayed;" "The earth and all her fulness owns;" "O Sun of righteousness, arise;" and, "Join all the glorious names." In the evening I read, at his request, Mr. Wesley's sermon on "The Way to the Kingdom," Mark i, 15. As I proceeded, he exclaimed, "How strong; yet how admirably simple! How beautifully clear and perspicuous! How forcible and convincing! No man ever saw the way to the kingdom more clearly than Wesley, and no man ever made that way so plain to others. The more I study his writings, the more I admire them." After reading a hymn, he prayed for nearly an hour, with astonishing and overwhelming power and energy, remembering not only his family individually, and pleading, nay, wrestling powerfully with God on their behalf, but also the Church in general, and especially our department of it, with an intensity of feeling, and earnestness of supplication, remarkably impressive and affecting.

The following incident is so characteristic that I cannot omit it. On the last day on which my dear father was able to come down stairs, I found him in great pain, with his head resting on the table, buried in papers and manuscripts. I was deeply affected; and remonstrated with him on the imprudence of suffering his mind to be occupied with business, when he was physically so incapable of attending to it, and besought him to allow me to lay the papers aside for the present.—With a melancholy tone he said, "Well, I believe you must. I fear I must yield; but you know my motto: *Nulla dies sine lineâ.*" So truly did he

> "His body with his charge lay down,
> And cease at once to work and live."

During his illness, my father frequently repeated the following striking saying of Hooker:—"Since I owe thee a death, Lord, let it not be terrible, and then take thine own time; I submit to it. Let not mine, O Lord, but let thy will be done!" When in great pain, he would often quote this passage from Jeremiah:—"If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses; and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

Speaking of the majesty of God, my father made the following remarks:—"O the glorious majesty of God! The peculiarities of the Christian religion are founded on the majesty as well as the mercy of God. The Old Testament writers dwell most on that subject. It is

softened down in the writings of the New Testament. How mistaken are those who think it inconsistent with the Divine majesty to regard the individual interests of man! 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered.' This particular care is so far from lessening, that it rather heightens, the conception of this perfection, as an ocean that fills up all the creeks, sinuosities, and indentations of every shore; and the ocean employs a series of secondary agencies, such as rivers and streams, which it sends forth, and then receives them all back again into its own bosom. So does God fill all in all."

On the Sunday preceding Christmas day, my dear father was free from acute pain, but in a state of great exhaustion, from previous suffering. He seemed to be fully aware of his danger; but his mind was perfectly tranquil. Observing me weeping bitterly, he said, "Compose yourself, my dear; keep your mind calm: commit the matter to Him who knows, not only what is right, but what is best. My flesh and my heart fail, but God is my rock. I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that when he shall appear, I shall appear with him. Yes; I shall see him as he is." On my expressing a hope that the disorder had passed its crisis, and that he would from that time begin to recover, he said, "Your affection makes you sanguine; but I wish neither to hope nor to fear, since He in whose hands I am knows best when to call his people to himself." In the evening of the same day, he requested me to read, from the supplement, a few of the hymns on the nativity, remarking, that many of them were exceedingly striking and beautiful. While I was reading, he responded to the sentiments contained in them with great fervour, and dwelt much on the majesty of the mercy of God in devising so magnificent and glorious a scheme of salvation. I then read that beautiful translation from the German, "Commit thou all thy griefs," and, "Give to the winds thy fears;" which, he said, comforted him greatly. Soon after, the pain returned with great violence; and, from that time, he relinquished all expectation of recovery. He continued in great agony until Monday evening, when he experienced some relief. On the following morning, (Christmas day,) he sent for me early; and when I entered the room, he smiled sweetly, and said, "My dear, this is Christmas day. This is the blessed morning on which Christ broke upon this dark, dreary world, when

> 'Plunged in a gulf of dark despair
> We wretched sinners lay,
> Without one cheerful beam of hope,
> Or spark of glimmering day.'

O, what a blessed Saviour! And here he is; ever at hand to sustain and comfort helpless man, and gild the dark and gloomy hours of pain and languor with bright hopes of immortal felicity."

I mention the following incident, because it shows the perfect composure with which my father contemplated death. One night, on my offering to wind up his watch, he handed it to me, saying, with great emphasis, "Here, take it, and wind it up for me a few times more.—I shall soon be 'where day and night divide his works no more.'" Then, clasping his hands, he exclaimed, "Eternity! eternity!" and, sinking back in his chair, seemed absorbed in the contemplations which that momentous word had suggested; while his brightening features, becoming impressed with the vastness of his conceptions, assumed an

almost supernatural expression. I felt awed, as in the presence of one already beginning to realize the mysteries of the eternal and invisible state; and scarcely dared to move or breathe, lest I should interrupt his heavenly musings, or bring down his soul from those "celestial heights."

To a friend who visited him on Saturday, December 29th, he said, "I am very ill; but I am where we have so often placed others,—in the hands of the Lord: he has imparted sweet consolation to me during my affliction. We have not preached cunningly-devised fables. O no! There is real, solid, substantial comfort and support in religion. I have been many times heavily afflicted, and have been often brought, so to speak, into the waters; but I have always found the rock firm beneath. I have never been so powerfully impressed with a sense of my own worthlessness as during this illness; and, in the prospect of approaching the majesty of God, my feeling is that of a worm crawling into the brightness of the sun. I feel as if about to take my place near some glorious throne; but I wish to creep low, and feel my own nothingness." My dear father then expressed his satisfaction that the doctrine of the atonement was so fully and clearly inculcated by our ministers, and that he was leaving our people so free from doctrinal agitation. "If I desire to live," said he, "it is to assist in keeping the great and fundamental truths of the Gospel pure and unmutilated before the people."

On Sunday, December 30th, my beloved father became much worse, and seemed fully conscious that his end was not far distant. While supporting his head, he looked at me for some moments, with intense affection, and said, in a very solemn and emphatic tone, "May the blessings of the upper and the nether springs be yours for ever!" This was his parting benediction; and from that time he said but little connectedly.

Such was the calm and peaceful manner in which this distinguished minister of Christ closed a life of laborious zeal and usefulness, and of almost uninterrupted affliction. He died at ten minutes past eight o'clock, on Tuesday evening, Jan. 8th, 1833, having nearly completed his fifty-second year.* The distressing intelligence was communicated to the Wesleyan circuits throughout the kingdom, by a letter from Mr. Beecham, then the only surviving secretary to the missionary society; and seemed to spread a gloom over the whole connection. Christians of other denominations participated in the general feeling. The sensation excited resembled that which is felt by an army in battle, when, "a standard bearer fainteth;" and the loss was every where regarded as irreparable. On the day following that of Mr. Watson's death, the committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society assembled, and passed the following resolutions, expressive of the estimate which they formed

*The subjoined brief description of the *post mortem* examination has been furnished by James Hunter, Esq.:—

"On making an examination after death, the gall bladder and adjoining portion of the liver were found adhering to the neighbouring viscera. The gall duct was completely obliterated, a case of very rare occurrence; the gall bladder was much altered in structure; and contained, instead of bile, a clear fluid like water. The changes in the liver, gall bladder, and ducts, were evidently of long standing; and were sufficient to account for the distressing symptoms under which Mr. Watson had been labouring for years."

of his character, and the extent of the loss which the society had sustained by his removal:—

1. That the committee find it impossible adequately to express their feelings on the present mournful occasion. When they reflect on the loss which the Church of Christ has sustained in the death of one whose singularly rare ability in expounding the word of God, and whose lofty and commanding eloquence, in enforcing its truths, placed him among the most distinguished of modern divines;—when they advert to the bereavement which the Wesleyan connection has experienced, in the removal of one of its brightest ornaments, and one of its ablest leaders; and more especially when they dwell on the loss this society has to bewail in the decease of its honoured secretary;—when they call to mind the share he had in the formation of this society, and his official connection with it, from its origin to the present time;—when they consider how greatly the success of the foreign operations of the society has resulted from his judicious counsel and wise direction, and how his persuasive pleading, his powerful pen, and the weight and influence of his character have contributed to promote its interests at home, by raising it in public estimation; and when they reflect, that the most consummate talents, and the most extensive experience, seem to be especially requisite in the present crisis of some of our most important missions, especially those in the West Indies;—while the committee dwell upon those weighty considerations with which this deeply-lamented occurrence has almost overwhelmed their minds; their only support is, an unshaken confidence in the continued care and superintendence of the great Head of the Church over his own cause and kingdom among men: "The Lord liveth, and blessed be our Rock; and let the God of our salvation be exalted."

2. That the committee would humbly endeavour to learn those important lessons which the afflictive visitation appears calculated to teach;—they would cultivate a spirit of greater dependence on God, who, however signally he may honour any of the instruments he sees fit to employ, does not need them for the accomplishment of his purposes, but can lay them aside, and still carry on his work;—they would regard the bereavement as a call on them in their official character to bind themselves anew to the sacred cause in which they are engaged, and to put forth their utmost energies in its support;—and they would attend to the loud warning given by the removal of another of the general secretaries in so short a time, and seek to cultivate personal piety with greater assiduity than ever, that they also may be found prepared for the awful summons.

The funeral of Mr. Watson took place on Tuesday, January 15th, at the City-Road chapel, where listening multitudes had so often attended his powerful ministry. All the Wesleyan ministers stationed in London were present; with a large concourse of Christians of various denominations, most of whom were deeply affected. The service was conducted by the Rev. Messrs. Joseph Entwisle, George Marsden, and Edward Oakes. Mr. Entwisle delivered an impressive address in the chapel, in the course of which he related some interesting particulars concerning the deceased.

In my last visit (said he) to my respected friend and brother, I was deeply interested and greatly delighted; and I trust that the good influence of the conversation will remain with me, not only through all time, but to all eternity. I found him extremely feeble in body; but his mighty mind was as vigorous as ever. I cannot detail the whole of the conversation which took place, but I will mention two or three particulars relative to it. "I had desired," said he, "to live a few years longer for certain purposes of usefulness; but that is all over now. I shall not recover, I believe. No medicine seems to reach my case. For years I have suffered much amidst all my labours; but during the last twelve months I have found that every attack has brought me lower and lower, and now I have no idea at all that I shall recover." I did not inquire of him any thing concerning the state of his mind; but of his own accord he informed me that he had been kept in perfect peace. I remarked that, from the nature of his disease, it would have been no wonder if he had suffered under depression. "No," said he, "I have not been depressed at all;" and there appeared such humility, tranquillity, and dignity in his aspect and manner, as I never witnessed before.

The words I shall never forget; and O, that I might always have a similar feeling; and you too, my brethren and sisters! "When I appear before God," said he, "I feel myself like a worm that has just crawled out of the earth amidst the glory of the meridian sun. It behoves me," he added, "to lie very low in the dust before God." Then we entered upon a conversation respecting the mercy seat,—the propitiatory; and how delightful it was to hear him speak of it!

After a while, he desired me to pray; and we seemed to have an open way to the mercy seat, free access through the blood of Christ, and liberty to ask and to have whatever we wanted. Others have said to me that they have always experienced similar feelings when engaged in prayer with our departed brother.

His remains were interred in the burying ground behind the City-Road chapel, where are the ashes of many of the pious and distinguished dead. His tomb is near that of Mr. Wesley; and not far distant are those of Messrs. Benson, Bradburn, Clarke, Olivers, Walter Griffith; ministers who were "famous in their generation, and men of renown."

Sermons on occasion of Mr. Watson's death were preached by the Wesleyan ministers in the principal towns throughout the kingdom; and the Rev. Jabez Bunting was requested by the missionary committee and the family of the deceased to improve the solemn event by a discourse in the City-Road chapel. With this request he kindly complied; and, notwithstanding the inclemency of the season, came from a remote part of the kingdom to pay this mark of respect to the memory of his esteemed and beloved friend. He preached on the morning of Friday, January 18th, to a very numerous and respectable congregation, consisting of Christians of various denominations, most of whom were dressed in black. The service was deeply interesting and impressive. The text selected by Mr. Bunting was John viii, 51: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death;" which was highly appropriate, and supplied an occasion for expatiating upon Mr. Watson's profound knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, and

unbounded attachment to all its peculiarities, and upon the peaceful and triumphant manner of his death. The sermon, which contained some valuable theological discussion, and an able delineation of Mr. Watson's character, was subsequently published, at the request of the missionary committee and his family and friends, with concise biographical notices. The Rev. Robert Alder, also, who was then stationed in Bristol, published an excellent sermon on Mr. Watson's death, in which he gave a strong and just description of his abilities, labours, and piety.

The following tribute to his memory, drawn up by the Rev. John Beecham, was read at the annual meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society on the 29th of April, and adopted as part of the committee's report:—

The committee cannot find language adequately to express their sense of the greatness of the loss which the society has sustained in the death of the Rev. Richard Watson, its senior secretary. Mr. Watson stood in a peculiar relation to the society. After the death of Dr. Coke, it became necessary to adopt a plan for providing support for the missions which had been committed, to so great an extent, to his care, and it was not long before the Wesleyan Missionary Society was formed to meet the emergency. In laying down the principles of the society, in framing its regulations, and marking out its plan of operations, Mr. Watson took a leading part; while his lofty eloquence awakened public attention to its benevolent object, and rapidly increased the number of its members and supporters. From the formation of the society to the period of his death, he remained officially connected with it as one of its secretaries; and he devoted to its service talents which, singly considered, were of the highest order, and which are so rare in their combination, that they are seldom found united in the same person. His presiding mind embraced the whole range of the society's missions, descending to the peculiarities of every separate mission, at the same time that it viewed them in their relations to each other, and ascertained their comparative importance. His discrimination of character was such, that he soon discovered any particular adaptation which a missionary candidate might possess for some one part of the mission field in preference to others; while, from his long continuance in office, he was personally acquainted with almost all the missionaries employed by the society. This knowledge of the society's missions, and of the character and abilities of its agents, led to the most beneficial practical results. He directed the operations of the brethren, so as to make their labours productive, under the Divine blessing, of the greatest good; and such was the parental kindness which he blended with authority, and such was the solicitude which he manifested for the welfare of the brethren, that his intercourse with them was as instructive and encouraging to themselves as it directed their movements beneficially for the missions. Could the whole of his correspondence with missionaries be collected, it would afford the most faithful picture of himself which he has left behind him. It would exhibit, not merely his great mental powers, but it would display the elevated character of his piety, and would present a faithful portraiture of the amiable qualities of his heart. The benefit resulting from his services in occasional negotia-

tions with his majesty's ministers, and with other persons in high official and influential situations, was of no ordinary kind; the lustre of his talents and the weight of his character reflecting a respectability on the society, and inspiring a confidence in its principles, which greatly facilitated its operations in the colonial dependencies of the empire.—And the same causes tended to sustain its reputation with the public in general; while his pulpit labours, and his pen, by the information which it communicated and its heart-stirring appeals, powerfully contributed to recommend the missions of the society more fully to the judgment and affections of its friends, and to draw forth their energies more extensively in its support. Nor are his efforts in behalf of the slaves of our colonies to be overlooked. No one took a more correct view of the evils of slavery in all its workings and bearings, or saw more clearly how it violates all the rights, and stands opposed to all the interests of its unhappy victims; how baneful are its effects on the morals of the whites themselves who are connected with it; or how great is the guilt and peril of our country, for having so long sanctioned it. His sense of the danger which threatens the nation from its continuance became very strong. A short time before his death, he said to a public man, "I believe my Bible; and because I believe it, I am persuaded, that now the nation is so fully enlightened on the guilt and enormity of slavery, it cannot suffer the evil to remain without the most imminent hazard to itself. You may plan and deliberate in the senate, but if you do not put an end to slavery, God will turn all your counsels for the good of the nation into foolishness, and will visit us for this great national sin." The last business letter which he wrote was to a distinguished statesman on this great question; in which, while he dwelt on the measures necessary for the abolition of slavery, he especially enlarged on the importance of extending religious instruction to the whole negro population. In the spirit of an enlightened philosophy, he had studied the effect of missionary operations among the slaves, and saw that, in spite of the obstacles which slavery presents, the Gospel was true to its great principles in all its workings among that degraded race; and that, while it promoted the highest interests of the negroes, it prepared them for the enjoyment of the inestimable boon of civil liberty. And when he looked at the number of religious negroes now found in all the West India Islands, and marked the vast moral influence which the Gospel had enabled them to exercise over those of their unhappy companions whose minds were not so fully enlightened, he saw clearly that the restraining influence of the religion of the converted negroes may be safely calculated on as sufficient, under the Divine blessing, to secure the peace of the colonies, on a judicious measure of negro emancipation being introduced. With such views it was not to be wondered at that he should be found solicitous to have the amplest facilities afforded for the communication of religious instruction to the entire negro population, as the most effectual means of raising the whole race, on their emerging into a state of freedom, into a happy, industrious, and well-ordered community. It may be mentioned as a proof of the intense hold which this subject had on his heart, that even in death his thoughts seemed to linger on the West Indies. Some time after he had formally unburdened himself of the cares of office, and only a few days before he breathed his last, he made

inquiries of his colleague respecting the afflicted Jamaica mission, and advised him as to the steps to be taken in its behalf. Mr. Watson may be regarded as a martyr to the sacred cause to which he had consecrated his noble powers. At the time that he was rendering such great services to the society, he took a distinguished part in the management of the general business of the connection, and was engaged in writing those numerous theological works which will remain an imperishable monument of his sanctified genius and profound research; while for several years during his term of office he had to attend to the ministerial and pastoral work of a regular circuit. It was to those accumulated labours, and more especially to his sitting during the day at his desk at the mission house, and then walking to some distant chapel to preach in the evening, that he himself was wont to attribute the origin of that disease, which subjected him to years of suffering, and eventually brought him to the grave in the meridian of his intellectual strength.

The character of Mr. Watson, given by the Methodist conference, and inserted in their printed minutes, will form a suitable conclusion to this melancholy detail. It was written by the Rev. John Scott, who had been Mr. Watson's colleague, and enjoyed his friendship.

Richard Watson. One of the most painful bereavements which any Christian Church ever suffered, our connection has sustained, in the loss of this distinguished man and eminent servant of Jesus Christ. In him were united intellectual powers which are seldom found combined in the same person, and never but in minds of the first order.—With great liveliness and brilliancy of imagination, he possessed a judgment uncommonly sound and discriminating. To his understanding belonged a capacity which the greatness of a subject could not exceed; a strength and clearness which the number and complexity of its parts could not confuse; and a vigour which the difficulty and length of an inquiry could not weary. These faculties were early awakened into action; and their first indication produced an impression on the minds of his friends, that the Head of the Church designed him for the Christian ministry. He began to preach at an early period of life; but not before he had been deeply convinced of his personal sinfulness and danger, and sought and found peace to his soul through faith in Christ; nor before he had experienced a Scriptural conversion to God. Not long after this memorable change, he was called into the itinerant ministry; in which he laboured with great zeal and promise of future eminence, for upward of four years. It is not surprising that a mind like his, conscious of its powers, should, in some of its early motions, have been irregular. But though for a few years withdrawn from our body, and a minister in another community, yet he did not renounce those vital doctrines which he first received: his heart held his understanding to the truth; and in 1812 he returned to our connection with a mind greatly enlarged, and enriched with a considerable store of various knowledge, and with his spirit much improved in Christian piety. On recommencing his ministry among us, his powers appeared to acquire new vigour; and in their full energy he devoted them all to the service of mankind. His great abilities first excited general attention by the part which he took in promoting

the missionary cause; and his sermons and speeches for that purpose, with his sermons on other particular occasions, may be ranked with the most splendid that ever mind conceived or tongue uttered. His regular ministry in a circuit, though adapted to more ordinary use, was not inferior to his occasional efforts. There was in him a rich fulness of evangelical truth; he arranged it with uncommon readiness; and he dispensed it with a liberality which never feared exhaustion; while his extensive acquaintance with ancient learning and modern science, and his susceptibility of impression from the scenes of nature, enabled him to illustrate and adorn his preaching with singular felicity. To the reasoning powers and habits of a philosopher, he united the imagination of a poet; the most familiar topics of Christian theology appeared with new beauty and force when set in the light of his genius;—he touched every thing with the hand of a master. His element was the lofty and the vast; his conceptions naturally rose into sublimity, and expanded into grandeur; yet there was nothing left vague and indefinite; for he could with ease adapt them to the humblest understanding, and concentrate them into sentiments and maxims of the most beautiful and impressive wisdom. Persons of the highest rank for intellectual power, in listening to his discourses, have rejoiced to feel and own the deep and powerful sway which he exerted over them; while the poor and the unlettered hung, with absorbed attention, on all that fell from his lips. As a preacher, it was his highest praise, that the subjects on which he usually chose to exert his powers were the truths, by the ministry of which, from age to age, the dead in sin have been quickened into spiritual life, and Christ exhibited in his fulness of grace, as the almighty Saviour of all who seek his help. To the Church of God his preaching was eminently useful; hallowing, and elevating the soul to heaven. He possessed a remarkable readiness in composition, and his pen was often employed in the service of truth. He wrote to defend our missions, when aspersed in the legislature of the country; to justify the true principles of Scripture interpretation, and establish the doctrines of Methodism, when popular writings were tending to compromise those principles and unsettle our faith; he wrote to instruct the young, and to assist men of riper age, and maturer mind, in their searches after Scriptural knowledge; and his writings will be admired, for implicit deference to the authority of the Scriptures, for clearness and soundness of theological reasoning and opinion, and beauty of expression, as long as the truth is held in estimation among men. In his writings, as in his preaching, utility was his aim; and no man could form a wiser judgment of what was useful. Though honoured, of late years, as one of the first intellectual men of his day, this produced no elation of heart: he regarded his talents and his time as given him in trust, and his exalted purpose was to gain the approbation of his Divine Master. The deep sense which he felt of his responsibility to God, while it humbled, strongly stimulated his mind; so that, in the absence of health, and frequently in suffering, to the last he held on his course without faltering. As life advanced, his piety became more elevated: the improvement of his moral frame engaged his utmost attention. He habitually preserved on his mind a devout sense of God: when he spoke of him, or worshipped him, he

was full of holy veneration; and his prayers, both in the congregation and with his friends, showed the full permission of approach to God which he enjoyed, and with what reverent boldness he availed himself of his privilege. He was eminently spiritually minded; and for some time before his death he exhibited the fruits of the Spirit in full maturity. In his last affliction he was greatly honoured of God; and perhaps the closing scene of no saint's life ever furnished lessons of richer instruction. On the approach of death, he viewed it as a foe, and felt it to be an evil; he was humbled that man should be stricken and trampled into the grave by the last enemy, and when, as in his own case, his faculties were in their prime, and his mind meditating and revolving plans of usefulness to the world. It was the glorious hope and Christian assurance of perfect bliss after death, and beyond the grave, that enabled him to triumph; and his triumph was complete. Through the grace of his Divine Saviour, with his characteristic strength of mind, he firmly grasped and applied his Christian principles; and they sustained his faith in his walk through "the valley of the shadow of death." "I am a poor, vile worm," said he; "but then the worm is permitted to crawl out of the earth into the garden of the Lord. * * * *

'I shall behold his face,
I shall his power adore,
And sing the wonders of his grace
For evermore.'"

Thus confident, he waited until his Master's call spoke him up to heaven. As a man, he was of a truly noble mind; superior through life to every thing mean and little; he was magnanimous, disinterested, generous. His form was dignified, and his countenance bore striking expressions of his intellectual greatness. His elevated views, and the majesty of his character, impressed a dignity on his manners, which the kindness of his temper, and his general readiness to oblige, rendered particularly easy and graceful. As a friend, he extorted no servile homage as the price of his friendship: if there were times when he was too much engaged in thought to exhibit more than common fervour of affection, there were others, which occurred far more frequently, when he gave himself freely to his friends; and then his conversation never failed to instruct and charm. This bright luminary of the Church and of his circle set in death, to rise in eternal glory, January 8th, 1833. He died in the fifty-second year of his age.

It might be supposed that a man of Mr. Watson's active and inquiring habits, and possessing great facility in literary composition, would write largely on many subjects of interest and importance; and that, toward the conclusion of his life, his manuscripts would be numerous. Such was the fact. But, during his last illness, when he despaired of recovery, having neither time nor strength to classify and correct his papers; and being apprehensive that some of them contained opinions which his maturer judgment would discard, and the publication of which in his name he therefore earnestly deprecated; he committed nearly the whole of them to the fire, except his Exposition, his sermons, and some of the speeches which he had prepared for public occasions. Having finished this conflagration, in which he was

employed for several hours, to the great grief of his family, and in opposition to their remonstrances, he emphatically said, "There: I have destroyed the labour of many years!" The Wesleyan book committee purchased the papers which were spared, with a reference to publication; and the Exposition was immediately put to press, according to Mr. Watson's intention. It is unquestionably one of the finest specimens of that species of composition in the English language. Without any of the parade of learning, it contains substantially all the light that classical and Jewish literature have thrown upon those parts of the sacred writings which he professes to explain, especially upon St. Matthew's Gospel. The principles of Biblical interpretation which he lays down and exemplifies are of the utmost importance.—He contends that the evangelists never cite the prophecies of the Old Testament in an accommodated sense; a point which some orthodox commentators have conceded, but which certainly ill accords with the idea of plenary inspiration. He also denies that any of the parables of our Lord were borrowed by him from the Jewish teachers; and maintains that the parables which are found in Jewish writings, resembling those of our Lord, are the productions of a later age, and were copied from the New Testament. So that the parables of the incarnate Son of God are not to be regarded as improvements upon the parables of Jewish rabbins, as some Christian divines have supposed; but the parables of the Jewish rabbins are the parables of our Lord, mutilated, perverted, and marred by ignorant and incompetent men, who had not the honesty to confess whence their lessons of instruction were derived: just as modern deists, having learned the principles of morals from the Holy Scriptures, and formed them into a sort of system, speak of them with consummate effrontery, as having been derived from "the light of nature;" and then contend that a revelation from God is unnecessary. The spirit which pervades Mr. Watson's Exposition is admirable. The work is often characterized by great tenderness and beauty, both of sentiment and expression; and it is scarcely possible for a devout mind to read it without spiritual advantage. It is eminently theological; but the theology which it contains consists not in matters of airy speculation: it brings the reader near to God, through the mediation of Christ, penitent and believing, that his sins may be pardoned, his nature renewed, his entire person sanctified, and presented to God "a holy, living sacrifice." Like Mr. Wesley's incomparable Notes on the New Testament, Mr. Watson's Exposition was written in sickness, and in the immediate view of eternity. That a man so gifted, and qualified to serve the Church in its highest interests, should be thus prematurely cut off, in the midst of his usefulness, is one of those mysteries of Providence which can only be understood in the light of eternity.

CHAPTER XXV.

Mr Watson's personal Appearance—Manners—Mental Character—Attainments—Judgment and Imagination—Fine Taste—Versatility of his Talents—Practical Habits—Uprightness and Consistency—Diligence—Pastoral Visitation—Kind Attention to Children—Temper—Effect of Disease upon his Spirits—Forgiving Temper—Generosity—Conduct in the Domestic Relations—Letter to his Son—Qualifications as Missionary Secretary—Usefulness in that Office—Catholic Spirit—Modesty—Powers of Conversation—Submission to the Authority of Scripture—Letter to a Speculatist—Character of his Preaching—Manner in the Pulpit—Examples of powerful Eloquence—Manner of conducting Public Worship—Attachment to his own Denomination—Conduct as a Methodist Preacher—Was not a theoretic Dissenter—Regard for the established Church—His deep Piety—Honour put upon him in Death.

From the preceding narrative, it is presumed, a tolerably accurate conception may be formed of Mr. Watson's person, labours, and character; and yet a few additional remarks upon these subjects, embodying some facts which have not been stated, and bringing his peculiar opinions and habits more distinctly into view, will perhaps be deemed neither unnecessary nor uninteresting.

It has been already observed, that his stature was six feet two inches. In person he was extremely slender; and though tall, his carriage was graceful and dignified. His eyes were a dark brown, bright and piercing. His forehead was remarkably lofty, broad, somewhat arched, and altogether formed with consummate beauty. His countenance, which was strongly marked, was expressive of intelligence, decision, deep thought, affection, and reverence. In the earlier part of his life it indicated great liveliness; but in his latter years, intense study and care, with incessant disease and pain, impressed upon it an air of sadness and languor. No attempts had been made to render his manners conformable to the rules of an artificial politeness; but the native dignity of his mind, his own inherent sense of what was becoming, and the benevolent feelings with which his heart was charged, gave a superior elegance and propriety to all his movements and conduct in social intercourse. Never perhaps was a man equally great more entirely free from eccentricity. His voice was a clear and mellow base, not remarkably strong; and was very agreeable, except when overstrained in large assemblies.

The mind of Mr. Watson was not distinguished by the overpowering energy of any one faculty, but by the assemblage of all that constitutes true greatness. Some men who have excelled in pure intellect, and as masters of reason, have possessed little vigour of imagination, or warmth of feeling; and men of unbounded power of imagination have often given sad proof of infirmity of judgment. Of the former class were Dr. Barrow and Bishop Butler; men whose writings are profound and original, but addressed exclusively to the understanding; and Bishop Taylor and Milton may be adduced as examples of the latter. The richness and splendour of Taylor's imagery are unrivalled; but as a Protestant divine his doctrine is frequently erroneous and misleading. Seldom has the evangelical method of a sinner's justification before God been more grievously mistaken than by this eloquent divine; and on the question of original sin, his views were very unsound. Milton's genius achieved in poetry what no other man ever accom-

plished; but, to say nothing of the gross theological errors into which he fell in the latter years of his life, he taught opinions concerning divorce which if practically exemplified, would subvert the very foundations of society, and be fatal to the morals of mankind; and a mind immensely inferior to his might have seen that the establishment of a military despotism upon the ruins of a constitutional monarchy was not likely to settle the liberties of the people of England upon a permanent base. Yet such was the serious conviction of the author of "Paradise Lost!" Few men possess, in an equal degree, the inventive power of imagination, and the reasoning faculty; and fewer still connect enlarged and comprehensive views of all the subjects to which their attention is seriously directed, with a practical judgment. Such, however, was the character of Mr. Watson's mind. There are in his works specimens of profound and original reasoning on theological and moral subjects which would reflect credit upon the greatest divines and metaphysicians; and there are other passages which, for sublimity of thought, and beauty of illustration, would bear an advantageous comparison with the most admired compositions in the English tongue. He united the fancy of a poet with a sound and discriminating judgment, a habit of minute investigation, and of calm and philosophic thought.

To form a correct view of the power of his mind it will be requisite to survey his attainments, and the circumstances under which they were realized. In very early youth he enjoyed the advantages of a regular scholastic training, especially in the mathematics, and in Greek and Latin; but at the age of fourteen his school books were laid aside, and his attention was directed to the business he had chosen; and though Euclid still engaged his attention at leisure hours, the passion for play and mischief at length nearly supplanted in him all delight in science as well as in literature. After he entered upon the Methodist itinerancy he had to preach eight or nine sermons every week, and almost daily to travel several miles. While thus employed, for more than two years, his reading was desultory, and classical learning neglected. When stationed with Mr. Edmondson, he began to study upon a plan, and made great proficiency in theological and general knowledge; but in less than three years afterward he was involved in the vexations of secular business. The seven or eight years which he spent as a preacher in the Methodist new connection were the only part of his public life that was favourable to mental cultivation. His official duties were limited, and he spent little time in travelling from place to place. After his return to the Wesleyan body his labours were incessant and severe. His duties as a minister were numerous and pressing; and those of his missionary secretaryship, with his frequent calls to preach occasional sermons in all parts of the kingdom, were so great an addition to his other engagements, as often to leave scarcely any time at his own disposal. Yet, under all these disadvantages, his attainments were surprising. He would indeed have been the first to disclaim the character of profound and accurate classical scholarship. He perused, however, the Latin poets and moralists with ease; he read the works of the most valuable of the Greek fathers; and within the last two or three years of his life he went carefully through the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, and the Odes of Pindar. He

was accustomed to read French and Hebrew; and he had a general knowledge of almost every branch of science, particularly of the different branches of natural philosophy. But it was to theology that his attention was principally directed; and to this master science he made every other subservient. In the knowledge of divinity he certainly was not inferior to any man of his age. He thoroughly understood the deistical, the Socinian, and the Calvinistic controversies, and knew the strength and weakness, as well as the practical bearing, of the systems to which they relate; and when occasion served, he could point out, with the utmost precision, the views entertained by different bodies of Christians respecting the principal doctrines of evangelical truth. The Bible was his chief delight. He studied the Greek Testament with close attention for many years, availing himself of the labours of the best critics, both foreign and domestic. He was well versed in the peculiarities of Scripture phraseology, and in Jewish antiquities, with their application to particular passages of holy writ. Considering the state of pain and sickness in which so large a portion of his life was spent, and the incessant bustle and activity in which he was engaged, it is astonishing whence he could have acquired those stores of Biblical and theological knowledge which he was accustomed to pour forth in conversation and preaching, and has embodied in his writings. But the fact is, that his thirst for knowledge was intense, and continued unabated to the last; and his perception was quick, almost beyond example. Many things he seemed to know intuitively; and he would often make himself a perfect master of a system before an ordinary student had conquered its elements. What he learned he scarcely ever forgot. His memory was remarkably tenacious, not of words, but of principles and things.

Mr. Watson's imagination was under the perfect control of a severe and strict judgment. It could produce original combinations of thought in endless variety, and in every form of beauty and sublimity; but that faculty was always kept in subordination to his understanding, and was never suffered to luxuriate into extravagance. He could embellish every subject upon which he either wrote or spoke with appropriate figures of speech; but he never uses an excess of ornament, nor conceals his meaning by a profusion of rhetorical flowers. Even a fastidious critic might hear his extempore discourses for years, without detecting in them any palpable confusion of metaphor. The figures used by him in his writings are remarkable for their originality; and they are seldom mere passing allusions, as is generally the case in the writings of ordinary men. They are introduced less for the sake of embellishment than illustration; and are often found on examination to contain striking analogies to the subject under discussion; so that, while they gratify the taste, they enlighten the understanding, and render the author's meaning more distinct and impressive.

In reference to almost every subject his taste was elegant and correct. He was a great admirer of fine specimens of art, especially in painting, statuary, and medals. On the opening of the annual exhibition at Somerset-House, by the Royal Academy, he was usually an early visiter to that place of attraction; and was often highly delighted with the productions of genius there presented to the public inspection. But it was in nature that his perception of the beautiful and sublime

met its highest gratification. No "poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling," and "glancing from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven," observed the works of creation with more minute attention; and no mind more admired the varied landscape, and the endless wonders of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. He traced the analogies between them and moral subjects; and often introduced allusions to them in his ministry and writings with the happiest effect. In one of his visits to Northampton, to attend a missionary meeting, where he was joined by the Rev. George Cubitt, he strayed into the green house of his kind host; and there a flower, of diminutive size and exquisite tints attracted his notice. For some minutes he stood gazing at it with his magnifying glass, in perfect silence; when he said to his friend, "Mr. Cubitt, I do not say that I disbelieve the article of the Church of England, which states that God is 'without body, parts, or passions;' but after all, sir, he is not a mere impalpable metaphysical existence. Look at this flower, sir;" pointing out some of its beauties of form and colour; and then added, with considerable emotion, "No, sir; God loves beauty, and has covered the earth with it. This is no chance production. The almighty Architect knew what he was doing when he made it, as much as when he made the most glorious world." His taste was sanctified, and rendered conducive to the improvement of his own piety, and that of others.

The versatility of Mr. Watson's talents was one of the most remarkable peculiarities of his character. He not only succeeded but excelled in every thing that he undertook, except in trade; and in that he was as certainly opposed by Divine Providence, as that "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." His Maker conferred upon him his great powers for a higher purpose than that to which he directed them when he retired from the ministry. He was equally eminent as a writer, and as a public speaker; in argumentation, and in eloquence; in the pulpit, and on the platform; in pleading the cause of Christian missions, and in directing their operations. With equal ease he could take enlarged and statesman-like views of national affairs, discuss the profoundest questions in theology and metaphysics, and enter minutely into all the arrangements of private life, even to the form and position of common articles of domestic furniture. He would engage in enlightened conversation with persons of highly cultivated minds; and enter into the views and feelings of pious peasants in country villages, so as to make himself equally instructive and agreeable. His works all bear the impress of his intellectual character; and yet they are greatly diversified in their style and manner. The "Life of Mr. Wesley" is an easy and flowing narrative; with many nice distinctions and acute remarks on points of theological doctrine. The "Conversations for the Young" are written with great elegance and simplicity. His sermons are fine specimens of powerful and commanding eloquence. Burke himself could not have excelled the rich and varied diction of the discourses on Ezekiel's vision, "Man magnified by the Divine Regard," and "the Religious Instruction of the Negro Slaves." The style of the "Theological Institutes" is nervous and unadorned, adapted to argument and disquisition; and his incomparable missionary reports present a remarkable admixture of minute and business-like detail, and of forcible appeals in behalf of a perishing world. "His qualifications for interpreting Scripture were of the first

rank. Calm, judicious, extensively read, possessing sound learning, he had at the same time a clear insight into the mind of the Spirit, and an intimate acquaintance with the phraseology, idiom, and general principles of interpretation of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures." (*Evangelical Magazine.*) Had it pleased the Almighty to bless him with robust health, and to spare him twenty years longer, when he would have arrived at the full age of man, it is impossible to say what stupendous monuments of genius and industry he would have reared, and left to posterity as a theologian and an interpreter of holy writ. But he was cut off at a period when his faculties were matured, and when most men who have been distinguished as writers have just begun to benefit the world by their talents and erudition.

Mr. Watson's mind and habits were eminently practical. There was nothing speculative and theoretic about him. He valued knowledge, books, and principles, according to their adaptation to useful purposes. Although he was an endless reader, he never cherished a passion for collecting a large library; and he seldom permanently retained any books, except such as he needed for the purpose of reference. When they accumulated, so that their removal from one circuit to another became inconvenient, he would dispose of them to the advantage of a poor and deserving man whom he wished to serve, and advise him to set up a stall in the street, and thus commence a business that might be ultimately beneficial. He had a deep impression of the responsibility connected with authorship; and in conversation often referred to the striking sentiment of Dr. South, that, in regard to men in general, their account for eternity closes with their lives; but that a "running account" is kept open with the writer of a bad book, as long as that book continues to circulate, and to injure mankind in their moral and spiritual interests. No man was happier than he in the selection of subjects upon which to employ his pen. Excepting one or two ephemeral productions which he wrote in early life, all his publications are of the useful and practical kind. They are intended to illustrate and defend the great principles of revealed truth; and they are generally acceptable to all classes of serious and devout Christians.

It has been thought by some persons, that as Mr. Watson commenced his religious career and ministry in the Wesleyan body, afterward was a preacher in the Methodist new connection, and then again returned to his former friends, there was something of fickleness and instability in his mind; but such persons have had very erroneous conceptions concerning his real character. His attachment to the vital doctrines of Christianity was formed at an early age, when he realized their truth and power in his own conversion; and to these he adhered through life. The more closely he studied them in the light of Holy Scripture, the deeper was his conviction of their Divine authority, and the more intense was his zeal in defending and propagating them. Under the pressure of peculiar circumstances he resigned his itinerant ministry, intending to support himself and his family by his labour through the week, and gratuitously to preach the word of life in his own neighbourhood, on the Lord's day. He soon felt that in this he had mistaken the path of duty; he was deeply distressed on account of the step which he had hastily and unhappily taken, and the situation in which he was placed. His salvation depended upon the

exercise of his ministry; and he entered into the Methodist new connection as the only field of evangelical labour that was then open to him. With his convictions and in his circumstances, the most uncompromising Wesleyan will hardly say that he did wrong in uniting himself as a minister with that body of Christian people. The new connection had then been formed for some years; and Mr. Watson had no concern whatever in dividing any society for party purposes; a practice of which he decidedly disapproved, as unchristian and injurious to the interests of true religion. Considering his very limited means and opportunities of usefulness in this community, and the unparalleled course of successful labour prepared for him by the providence of God among his old friends, both as a writer, and an advocate and director of Christian missions to the heathen, the most ardent admirer of the new connection will scarcely blame him for returning to the people who had been his first religious associates. In leaving his proper work as an itinerant preacher, he was clearly and decidedly wrong; but he did what he could to retrieve that practical error; and when the difficulties with which he was for many years surrounded are taken into the account, it is no mean praise to say, that he maintained his personal honour and integrity unsullied. His offence in the sight of God was painfully visited, and graciously forgiven; and in the subsequent years of his life greatly was he blessed and distinguished by his Lord, above the ordinary lot of men. Perhaps some previous humiliation was necessary to prepare him for that elevation which awaited him as a public man. At all events, the disappointments and mortifications of his early life were sanctified to him by the providence and grace of God; and when any of his opponents, unmindful of the laws of honourable controversy, had the meanness to insult him by sarcastic references to the painful effects of his one act of indiscretion, he endured their mockery with meekness and in silence. He felt that this was a matter in which God and his own conscience were specially concerned.

Mr. Watson was one of the most striking examples of Christian diligence the world has ever seen. He never appeared to be in a hurry, but he was always intent upon "doing and receiving good." He appeared always to keep the great end of life steadily in view. His reading was extensive; and his profound knowledge, especially of theology and Biblical literature, was the result of deep and incessant thought. One could scarcely ever meet with him, after an interval of a few days, but he showed, by the tenor of his conversation, and the questions which he proposed, that he was pursuing some new train of inquiry, anxious to ascertain and know the truth upon a scale the most enlarged. Some obscure text, or difficult point in theology, was generally under his consideration; and he was ready, on every occasion, to draw forth the views of those persons with whom he conversed, who were addicted to studies of this nature. His questions were proposed with such perfect candour, as greatly to relieve his friends from the embarrassment which they would otherwise have felt in hazarding premature opinions on the subject specified, especially in the presence of one whose knowledge was so comprehensive, and whose mind was so scrutinizing and powerful. When he was at home he generally read while taking his meals. He kept in his bed room a copy of Valpy's Greek Testament, with the Latin notes; and within the last few years

of his life he read the whole of that work while in the act of undressing himself. The plans of some of his most admired sermons and speeches are said to have been formed in his mind when he was travelling by coach to attend missionary meetings in the country; and such was his habit of study, and power of abstraction, that he has often passed some of his most intimate friends in the streets of London, without recognizing them. It may give some conception of his activity to survey his labours for the last three years of his life, when he was resident at the City-Road; and they are merely a specimen of his regular and accustomed exertions. During this period he was in a state of constant affliction, and through pain and disease presented almost the appearance of a living skeleton; yet he discharged with efficiency the duties of superintendent of the circuit, except when disabled by illness; he exercised a ministry which increased in interest, and comprehended the delivery of a course of able lectures on the first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans; he devoted a part of his time to pastoral visiting from house to house, and especially to visiting the sick; he attended the meetings of the numerous committees entrusted with the management of the Wesleyan book concerns and missions; he spent much time in deliberating with the other secretaries on the affairs of the missions generally, and especially on those of the West Indies, some of which were then violently opposed by the planters and local authorities; during the last of these three years he devoted one forenoon in every week to the missionary work, when he visited Hatton-Garden to assist the resident secretaries; he wrote his Conversations for the Young, and his Life of Mr. Wesley; he arranged the matter of his Theological and Biblical Dictionary, composed many of its articles, and superintended the printing of the whole; and he also wrote his admirable Exposition of St. Matthew's Gospel. Not satisfied with these efforts, he meditated an exposition of the Old Testament, when he had finished the New; and he had entered upon a Life of Mr. Charles Wesley, which he intended to pursue as a sort of relaxation from severer studies. Two paragraphs of this work were found in his desk after his decease.

Such were the labours of a dying man. Like Thomas Walsh, whom in some respects he greatly resembled,

> "He scorn'd his feeble flesh to spare,
> Regardless of its swift decline;
> His labour this, his only care,
> To spread the righteousness Divine:
> He truly triumph'd in the cross,
> Its marks he in his body show'd,
> Lavish of life in Jesus' cause,
> Whose blood for all so freely flow'd."

"In the midst of life," says Mr. Montgomery, "he consumed away, like incense upon the altar, burning bright, and diffusing fragrance, till not a residue can be seen."

As an illustration of the spirit and manner in which he discharged his pastoral duties, in visiting the people under his care from house to house, the following particulars, which have been kindly supplied by Mrs. Bulmer, may be adduced:—

"One morning I was favoured with a call from Mr. Watson. It was one of those pastoral visits which he was accustomed to pay to the

City-Road society, the members of which he considered as his own special charge. According to his habit, he turned to solemn and instructive subjects of discourse. The resurrection of the body, and its evidence arising from the analogies of nature, soon became the leading topic of conversation. I found him prepared, not only to question, but to deny, that any proof whatever of the truth of this important doctrine can be gathered from that quarter; and on this ground, that there is no identity in the chief circumstance,—death. In nature, nothing that is positively dead revives. Through the dreary months of winter vegetation lies quiescent, but the principle of life remains.—Spring, with its genial influences, calls forth that which has been dormant; but, strictly speaking, nothing that was dead lives again: whereas the human body in death is resolved into its primeval elements, and retains no principle of even incipient life. There is no germ which, according to any natural constitution, or law imposed by the Creator, will spring forth into renovated life. The resurrection of the dead will be the result of an immediate operation of Divine power.—That it will take place, is a doctrine of pure revelation; and our belief of it rests solely upon the authority of God's word. Shortly after this interesting conversation, which greatly impressed my mind, I was so happy as to meet him casually at the house of a mutual friend, on whom also he had made one of those kind and official calls which gave him so great an interest in the grateful and affectionate esteem and veneration both of individuals and families. We walked into a large and beautiful garden. It was the blooming season of spring. Delight, admiration, and gratitude, were the sentiments suggested by the scene. They were felt and acknowledged. 'But you, sir,' said one of the party, 'have dissolved a portion of the charm with which this loveliness was wont to be invested. We may no longer justly consider the beautiful renovation of nature as emblematical of man's reviviscence after the winter of death.' 'No,' he replied, 'the revival of creation in spring can only be very loosely employed even in illustration of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.' Perceiving on the ground a large leaf, which had been beautifully veined by insects, and which was perfectly dead and dry, he stooped to take it up, and said, 'Now look at this leaf. No shower or sunshine will ever revive it. It derives no genial influence from that spring which clothes every thing around it with beauty. It is dead, and will never revive. But we require neither analogies nor metaphysics to sustain our conviction of the certainty of the resurrection of the dead. It is a doctrine of pure revelation; and in the Divine power and veracity we have a sufficiently strong foundation of our faith.'

"The beautiful leaf by which this argument was illustrated I preserved, and presented to a young relative, who was then with me on a visit, and who was a diligent and delighted observer of nature in its wonderful and varied departments. I gave her with it the detail of Mr. Watson's observations; and it is still laid up among a large collection of botanical treasures, to which, alas! she is not now likely to make any farther additions. Delicate, and frail, and lovely, as a lily in the sunshine of spring, she has been nipped by the frost, and is now drooping and dying. But, though the flower fadeth, the word of the Lord endureth for ever; and firm in the confidence of faith, through the merits of her Redeemer, she is awaiting the approach of the last

enemy without terror, in the sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life."

In all Mr. Watson's pastoral visitations, children were prominent objects of his kind solicitude. He regarded them as the lambs of the flock of Christ, and the hope of the Church; he sometimes wrote pithy sentences in their books, and presented to them little curiosities; and he occasionally mingled with their amusements, for the purpose of obtaining their confidence, and more effectually to promote their spiritual and moral benefit. His attentions to them became increasingly tender to the end of his life; and of him, as well as of the regenerated father of mankind, it might be truly said, in the language of Mr. Montgomery,—

> "Children were his delight; they ran to meet
> His soothing hand, and clasp his honour'd feet;
> While, 'midst their fearless sports, supremely blest,
> He grew in heart a child among the rest."

Mr. Watson's spirit was naturally lofty and independent; but by the grace of God he became meek and lowly in heart; and instead of affecting independence, either as a Christian or a minister, he felt it his duty practically to regard the apostolic admonition: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." An impression has prevailed in some quarters that he was cold, dogmatic, and repulsive. It is not difficult to account for this. In the course of his extensive journeyings he was doubtless often introduced to persons who were overawed by the power of his intellect; and who, being unable to accompany him in conversation, or to withstand the force of his reasonings, would feel themselves in the situation of the readers of Paradise Lost, which Dr. Johnson thus describes: "We read Milton for instruction, retire harassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation. We desert our master, and seek for companions." The defect in this case was not in Mr. Watson's spirit, but in the abilities and feelings of the persons into whose society he was casually thrown, and whose opinions he might sometimes feel it his duty to controvert. It should also be added, that he was a man of the strictest integrity and uprightness; and any thing which he conceived to be mean and dishonourable always called forth his honest indignation, and occasionally extorted from him rebukes which were calculated to "shake the delinquents with such fits of awe" and shame as were not likely to be soon forgotten. He had a deep conviction of the evil of strife and divisions among religious people, having seen their blighting influence upon personal piety, and upon the prosperity of the work of God; and he would enter into no compromise with the men who arise in the Church, "speaking perverse things, not sparing the flock, and seeking to draw away disciples after them." For these men his severest censures were reserved; but he never expressed himself to such offenders in stronger language than that which the apostles have used in similar cases. Yet in dealing with wicked and disorderly men of this class he was jealous of himself, and has been known to ask his friends whether he had used terms more severe than the occasion would justify. "I have such a detestation of the principles of those men,"

he would sometimes say, "that I am afraid lest I should express myself in language of too great severity."

It was not to be expected that Mr. Watson's long and severe affliction would exert no influence upon his spirits. He must have been more than human to have endured pain and wasting disease from year to year with the buoyancy of vigorous health. His sufferings did not unfrequently induce gloomy feelings, and unfit him for that "feast of reason and that flow of soul" in which he had formerly delighted to indulge in converse with his friends; and these feelings formed a distorted medium through which he occasionally looked both at persons and things. This he was free to confess, and often lamented; but it would be unjust to accuse him of any approach to ill nature. Till his sufferings had seriously affected his spirits, he was eminently sociable and communicative; and to the end of his life he greatly enjoyed the company of pious and intelligent persons. It may serve to show the excellence of his temper to state, that, when he was writing his principal works, which required deep and undistracted thought, he was frequently called from his study at least twenty times in a day; and although he did not in every case of impertinent intrusion "galvanize his muscles to a smile," few men have ever borne such interruptions with more exemplary patience and self possession.

A readiness to forgive injuries, and to acknowledge errors and faults, was a striking peculiarity in Mr. Watson's character; and at the same time there was in him a nobleness and generosity which it is difficult to describe. He seemed to be absolutely incapable of every thing mean and selfish. It was his "perfect scorn," the "object of his implacable disgust;" and there was a corresponding dignity in all his demeanor. In his intercourse with his friends, and his moments of relaxation from severer pursuits, he was often playful as a child, and would relate anecdotes, of which he possessed a great variety, with admirable effect and native humour. Yet he never lost sight of the respect due to his office and character as a minister of Christ, nor indulged himself in unbecoming levity. His wit was brilliant and prompt, and his powers of satire and invective irresistible; but they were laid under constant restraint, and never employed to wound the feelings of his associates, or to injure the reputation of absent persons. Those who applied to him for favours found him "easy to be entreated." When requested to preach occasional sermons, he rarely refused, if it was in his power to comply; and the readiness with which he consented greatly enhanced the value of his services. He never kept the applicants in painful suspense, by urging frivolous excuses; and a repetition of the request was seldom necessary. His liberality to the poor and indigent knew no limits but an empty purse; and he often subjected himself to straits and inconveniencies to meet the wants of others.

In the various domestic relations Mr. Watson was entitled to high commendation. He did indeed "honour his father and mother," not only by every mark of filial affection and respect, but by affording them assistance under the pressure of age and adverse circumstances. Often did he deny himself, that he might be the better able to promote their comfort. His surviving family speak of him as one of the kindest of husbands and parents, whose constant solicitude it was to meet their wishes as far as lay in his power; and no sacrifice did he deem too great in his endeavours to render them happy. His conviction of

parental responsibility was very deep; and hence he would not entrust the training of his son and daughter to merely mercenary teachers; but was himself accustomed for some years to devote two hours daily to their instruction. When he could abstract a larger portion of time from his official duties, it was appropriated to them; but the rule was, that they should be two hours every day under his own immediate tuition. The scholarship of his children was derived principally from his own personal instructions; and is equally honourable to the teacher and his pupils. When his son was pursuing his classical studies at home, such was Mr. Watson's kind solicitude for his improvement, that he often went even three or four times a day into the room of the youth to inquire whether he had met with any difficulties which he was unable to surmount, and to afford his assistance. His deep concern for the spiritual interests of his children is attested in several of his letters contained in these memoirs, and addressed, when he was from home, to different members of his family. Many affectionate and improving letters he addressed to his son when separated from him. The following has been preserved. It was not received in time to be inserted in chronological order.

Brighton, Feb. 18th, 1823.

Dear Tom,—After having been cheated by the Angel coach in the fare, and squeezed up in a six-inside old Islington stage, we arrived safely here. Through the mercy of God I feel my health improve, though the weather is cold. I got out to chapel twice yesterday; and was thankful that again I was brought by Providence into the house of God, to worship at his footstool.

Thursday was a calm day; but Friday and Saturday brought us gales and wind, and your mother was all wonder at the waves. The roar of the sea was in our ears night and day, and filled the mind with sublime thoughts of the power of the elements, and the might of their great Ruler.

We live in a curious sort of style, having every little thing to provide. Sometimes we are without butter when the meal comes, and we have to send out; and then we wonder whether our remaining piece of bread will serve us for breakfast or tea; so that we need a good deal of contrivance, and our forgetfulness is often amusing.

Save an occasional visit from the preachers, we are not likely to be called upon by any person of intelligence or interest.

I hope you are diligent while at study; and that you will leave yourself, by application, the leisure for exercise. You are now approaching man's estate, and must "put away childish things." Be thoughtful for your future prospects in life; and, above all, give your heart to God. Seek him *first;* and you will not be without his providence to direct you in life; and without that you will be wretched. Make a point of reading a portion of Scripture every day, with prayer that you may obtain pardon, and experience that *conversion* without which you can never enter the kingdom of God. Write this upon your heart.

Perhaps no man possessed better qualifications for the office of a missionary secretary than Mr. Watson. His high sense of justice and honour rendered him cautious in the appropriation of public money; and his cordial affection for the missionaries secured from him prompt attention to their wants. He had a thorough knowledge

of the peculiarities of every station occupied by the society with which he was connected; and his letters of advice and encouragement addressed to the missionaries were marked by fidelity, wisdom, and kindness. His respect for the missionaries was very strong and cordial. He regarded them as raised up by the special providence and grace of God; and he greatly honoured them for their work's sake.—With many of them he was personally acquainted; not a few had pursued a course of preparatory study under his own direction; and their self denial, and heroic piety and zeal, excited his admiration.—Their discouragements and privations awakened his sympathy; and daily did he, in the most feeling manner, invoke blessings upon the head of the missionary, and on the "crown of the head of the man" who, to save souls from death, is "separated from his brethren."—When he bowed his knees before the Lord, whether in the family, in the public congregation, in the social party, or in the conference, the missionaries were almost sure to be remembered by him. Their sufferings from persecution, and personal or domestic affliction, deeply affected him. When Mr. James died, and Mr. Watson had prepared some account of that excellent man for publication in the monthly missionary notices, the printer inquired whether he should inclose the mournful intelligence in a black border. Mr. Watson, who then began seriously to anticipate his own dissolution, replied, "O no! when we announce the deaths of our blessed missionaries, we never accompany their names with any such mark of distinction; and yet, what are the services which any of us render to the missionary cause, compared with the services and hardships of the men who labour and die among heathens and savages, without perhaps a friend to close their eyes?" As a public man, and the former able editor of the Liverpool Courier, Mr. Watson was well known to the principal members of his majesty's government, especially under the administration of the earl of Liverpool; and this circumstance was of great advantage to the missions. It often gave to his memorials and suggestions, addressed to the colonial office, a weight which they would not otherwise have possessed. All his talents and influence he devoted, not to the objects of personal honour and emolument, but to the cause of Christ, and the benefit of mankind.

The success of the Wesleyan missions was to him a ground of holy joy and triumph. When he was first connected with them their annual income fell short of £7000; the missionaries were about sixty in number; the persons in religious society on the mission stations amounted to somewhat more than fifteen thousand; and he lived to see the yearly income of the society raised to £50,000; the missionaries increased to somewhat more than two hundred, exclusive of a large number of catechists and other subordinate teachers; and the regular and accredited members of society, under the pastoral care of the missionaries, augmented to nearly forty-four thousand, a large proportion of whom were converts from the darkness and misery of heathenism. He witnessed the formation and establishment of flourishing missions in Southern Africa, India, New South Wales, and the Tonga Islands, and men every where raised up to exercise a native ministry; as well as the extension of the work in all the old stations, particularly in the West Indies. Toward these glorious achievements of Christian mercy the personal exertions of Mr. Watson greatly con-

tributed. His ministry and writings, by the blessing of God, gave an impulse to the missionary cause which is felt in every part of the empire, and in every quarter of the globe; and its effects will be gratefully acknowledged in future ages.

Mr. Watson's connection with the mission cause often brought him into direct intercourse with Christians of various denominations, and gave exercise to that catholic and liberal spirit in which he delighted to indulge. Men like him seemed to be raised up for the benefit of the universal Church; and he embraced with a cordial affection "all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." To bigotry and rash judging among Christians, he was decidedly and on principle opposed. While he claimed the right of private judgment himself, he freely conceded that right to others; and took a pleasure in recognizing the image of his Saviour in men whose religious creed in many respects differed from his own. He would indeed hold no religious communion with those who impugn the distinguishing verities of Christianity, especially those who deny the Godhead and atonement of Christ, and the immaculate purity of his human nature; but he acknowledged as his brethren in the Lord orthodox and devout believers of every name. It gave him pleasure occasionally to occupy the pulpits of pious and liberal dissenters, especially that of Dr. Burder, of Hackney; and he cultivated the personal friendship of some excellent clergymen of the established Church. Where the graces and virtues of the Christian character appeared, he acknowledged them as the fruit of the Holy Spirit's operation, and was not tenacious of every peculiarity of a favourite phraseology. Among that part of the clergy who are not usually denominated evangelical, and the attendants upon their ministry, it was his persuasion that there is far more sincere piety than some warm religionists are disposed to admit, though somewhat of an ascetic kind, and not so aggressive and missionary in its character as is desirable. Uncharitableness he regarded as a sin, and greatly admired that universal benevolence which Mr. Wesley inculcated and exemplified. "One of the characters of genuine Methodism," says he, "is, that it is abhorrent of the spirit of sectarianism. It meets all upon the common ground of loving the Lord Jesus in sincerity. Its sole object is, to revive and extend Christianity in all Churches, and in the world; it teaches us to place religion, not in forms and opinions only, but in a renewed nature, and especially in the Christian temper; and the writings of its venerable founder are, more than those of any modern divine, imbued with that warm and expansive affection, the love of the brethren, which our Lord made the distinguishing mark of discipleship. Others have dwelt upon it as a grace; he enforces it as a virtue. Others have displayed it as an ornament of the Christian character; he has made it an essential of practical piety."

Mr. Watson was as remarkable for his modesty as for any other quality whatever. He was never dogmatical in conversation, but always paid a just deference to the opinions of others. For many years he occupied a very prominent station as a public man; he was regarded, even beyond the limits of his own denomination, as one of the master spirits of the age in which he lived; and many persons of talent, and of elevated rank, sought his acquaintance, and solicited his opinions on subjects of interest. Yet he never appeared to be lifted

up by the respect which was shown him; and he scarcely ever mentioned, even in the society of his most intimate friends, his interviews and correspondence with eminent personages. To the largeness of his congregations he was scarcely ever known to refer; and he never spoke of the impression produced by his incomparable discourses and speeches. The encomiums which he might occasionally hear passed upon his ministry always appeared to make him uneasy; and he invariably waived the subject by introducing some other topic of discourse. No one ever heard him depreciate his own sermons for the purpose of affording an opportunity for others to express their admiration of his ability;—an expedient to which vanity sometimes resorts for its gratification. Seldom would he commit any of his works to the press till he had obtained the opinion of his friends respecting their value; and he was often guided by the judgment of men greatly inferior to himself, both in intellect and acquirements. While his publications were read by others with delight and edification, he took little pleasure in them. We have seen that after he had published the sermon which he preached at the formation of the Wesleyan Missionary Society at Leeds, he declared to a friend that he was heartily ashamed of it; and that, on completing his Theological Institutes, he remarked to his printer, "I ought never to have begun them." When he had nearly finished his Exposition of St. Matthew's Gospel, he entertained serious thoughts of abandoning his design of extending that work to the end of the New Testament; and proposed to merge his critical and expository labours in an improved edition of Mr. Benson's Commentary on the Bible. "If the public," said he, "give me any credit for Biblical knowledge, I will gladly lay my reputation at the feet of that great and excellent man. The excellence of his Commentary has never yet been duly estimated." He was persuaded, however, to persevere in his original design by the earnest entreaties of the writer of these memoirs, who urged that an original theological Exposition of the New Testament, upon the plan which he had laid down, and thus far so successfully executed, was greatly to be desired. It may be proper here to observe, that the more carefully Mr. Watson examined the work of Mr. Benson, the more he was impressed with its value, as a sound and correct interpretation of the word of God, and adapted to promote practical godliness.

As Mr. Watson had a high relish for rational and enlightened conversation, so his powers in this most useful and edifying exercise were of the first order. Having a general and accurate acquaintance with both sacred and profane literature, and with public affairs, as well as an intimate knowledge of human nature, he was never at a loss for interesting topics of discourse. In conversation he poured forth his intellectual treasures with all the confidence of an original thinker; and with all the munificence of one who knew that, while he made others rich, he was in no danger of making himself poor. He was well skilled in the art of conducting an instructive conversation on subjects with which he only was familiar, without permitting others painfully to feel their comparative ignorance. Often did he instruct without seeming to do more than inquire. He took pleasure in noticing and honouring modest worth; and though he must have been often aware that he was the soul of the company, and that nearly the whole expense of the mental feast devolved upon himself, he never appeared to grudge

the demands which were made upon his resources. He was rarely known to laugh aloud; and whenever he perceived that the conversation was in danger of degenerating into trifling, he would say, "Well; this is a digression; now for something more serious." By proposing a question to some one in the company, he would introduce a subject of importance. His conversation was always useful and instructive, becoming a wise and good man; and it increased in spirituality to the end of his life. He never appeared wishful to attract attention by any peculiarities of sentiment and manner. No attempts were made by him to excite admiration by flashes of wit, the utterance of paradoxes, or by a bold dogmatism. To convey information, to promote piety, and to minister to the innocent gratification of his friends, seemed to be his prevailing desire in social intercourse. Dr. Johnson is said to have conversed for victory; but it may be safely said that Mr. Watson's great end in conversation was instruction and moral improvement; and had his colloquies been preserved, they would have shown that he was quite as successful in building up, as the doctor was in pulling down. When his friends retired from his society, the remark was often extorted from them, "Mr. Watson never disappoints us. His conversation is always interesting, and always new."

As a theologian, the distinguishing peculiarity of his mind was, an absolute submission to the authority of holy Scripture. Of the necessity and value of Divine revelation, his convictions were deep and solemn. All true religion he considered as based upon revelation. Without the direct sanction of the Almighty, he thought even the most correct religious and moral principles could only be regarded as the unauthorized opinions of individuals, and would therefore fail to bind the consciences of men. Whatever truth may be discovered in the religious systems of the heathen he viewed, not as the original discoveries of human reason, but the traditionary remains of those revelations which were vouchsafed by God in the primitive ages. He had carefully studied the various religious and moral systems of heathenism, as well as the principles and claims of modern deism; and he found in them nothing to meet the wants of sinful and dying men, but much to aggravate their guilt, and increase their misery. Of every heathen and deist in existence he perceived that it might be justly said, "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Without a revelation, men have never been able to discover either their origin or their end; they have never ascertained the perfections and character of God, the true relations in which they stand to him and to each other, and the obligations resulting from those relations; and the designs of the Almighty, in regard to a future state, have remained in palpable obscurity. Above all, they have never been able to discover in what manner guilt might be cancelled, and a corrupted nature renewed. Anxious to know the truth, Mr. Watson studied the deistical controversy with close attention, and intense interest. He read all the principal works that skepticism and infidelity have produced, and carefully weighed the arguments which they contain. Against these he balanced the reasonings advanced by the apologists of revealed religion; taking into the account the practical influence of the different systems, as exemplified in the history of all ages, and in the present state of the world; and the result of his inquiries was, a perfect con-

viction of the inspiration, and consequent Divine authority, of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and their uncorrupted preservation. With this conviction his mind was at rest. He viewed Christianity as reposing upon the two immovable pillars of prophecy and miracles; and while he admired the fair and beautiful proportions of the system, his heart expanded in grateful feeling, and its prevailing sentiment was, "Thanks be unto God for the unspeakable gift!" "Inspired theology" he justly regarded, with Lord Bacon, "as the haven and Sabbath of all man's contemplations."

A revelation from God, Mr. Watson perceived, must have a character of authority; not in its preceptive part merely, but in all its doctrinal statements and discoveries; and it is as much the duty of men to submit their reason to the Divine wisdom, as it is their duty to submit their wills to the Divine commands. Reason is an excellent gift of God; but its exercise is not to be carried beyond the prescribed bounds. Its office is to judge of the evidences of revelation; and to ascertain its fair and legitimate meaning; but it is not to reject, nor even to modify, any doctrine which the revelation of God obviously teaches, because it happens not to accord with our preconceived opinions. Our present state is a state of discipline and trial. In several instances, God has revealed facts, and the principles of things, the reasons of which are reserved in the counsels of his infinite wisdom. "We know in part;" "we see through a glass darkly;" and our present calling is, to "walk by faith, and not by sight." "Out of the contemplation of nature," says the profound philosopher just mentioned, "or ground of human knowledge, to induce any verity or persuasion concerning the points of faith, is, in my judgment, not safe: *Da fidei quæ fidei sunt.* For the heathens themselves conclude as much in that excellent and Divine fable of the golden chain: that gods and men were not able to draw Jupiter down to the earth; but contrariwise, Jupiter was able to draw them up to heaven. So as we ought not to attempt to draw down or submit the mysteries of God to our reason; but contrariwise, to raise and advance our reason to the Divine truth. So as in this part of knowledge, touching Divine philosophy, I am so far from noting any deficiency, as I rather note an excess; whereunto I have digressed; because of the extreme prejudice which both religion and philosophy have received and may receive, by being commixed together; as that which undoubtedly will make a heretical religion, and an imaginary and fabulous philosophy." (*Advancement of Learning.*)

With these sentiments, so eloquently expressed by the father of the inductive philosophy, Mr. Watson decidedly concurred. "We can reason but from what we know;" and Divine revelation directs our attention to subjects which infinitely surpass all the knowledge that we can acquire from created nature, and which therefore contradict our previous conceptions, and the conclusions we have been wont to deduce from them. On this question Mr. Watson speaks with a fearlessness worthy of a profound thinker, and of a consistent advocate of revealed religion. "I have no hesitation," he remarks, "in saying that the doctrines of the trinity in unity, of the union of two natures in the person of Christ, of the resurrection of the same body, not only transcend, but contradict, human reason. For what is the meaning of this formidable phrase, brandished with so much defiance by the enemies of revelation,

and under which so many Christian divines have cowered, and to escape whose apprehended edge they have too often come to disgraceful and compromising terms with the enemy? The only meaning it can have, is contrariety to our previous knowledge; to those inferences with which we have been furnished by the use of our rational faculties, and which we conclude to be true. This, however, involves the following uncertainties in a great number of cases,—whether our conclusions are, in fact, true;—whether they are universally true;—whether they are at all applicable to the case;—or in how many respects they are applicable. But if this previous knowledge of ours be assumed to be true, I question not but it will meet with frequent and full contradiction in the sacred record: for that is contradictory to our reason, which, when proposed to us, we pronounce false and impossible. Let, then, the doctrines of the trinity, the compound nature of Christ, and the resurrection of the same body, be formed into abstract propositions, and proposed to us, not under authority, as doctrines of revelation; let it be asked, can three persons exist in one undivided essence, and one person in two natures of a different essence? and the reason of probably every human mind would meet them with an instant negation. But what does revealed truth suffer from this? Plainly, nothing more than true philosophy suffers from it. Let the Copernican doctrine of the mobility of the earth, and the fixedness of the sun, be also thrown into abstract propositions. Let a man unacquainted with philosophy be asked, whether a body which he daily sees ascend from one side of the earth, make a circuit in the air, and sink down on the other side, remains stationary the whole time; and it contradicts his reason, and he instantly denies it. Let him again be asked, whether there can be so great a contradiction between his reason and his senses, that his reason will ever affirm to the conviction of his mind what the experience of his sight has daily for many years determined him to deny; and he would not be persuaded that his Maker had so constructed him, that his reason should in any case contradict the daily evidence of his senses. And yet, let this man have the Copernican scheme unfolded to him on its most easy and popular evidences, and he will probably become a convert, and acknowledge that what before contradicted his eyes, and his reason too, must be unquestionably true. The truth is, that what transcends our reason may be also contradictory of it; that is, contrary to all that previous knowledge by which its operations are conducted; and in many cases is so. But this certainly proves nothing against the truth of things. It proves only that our reason is not always sufficiently enlightened to come to certain determinations; that its *data* are defective; and that if in such cases men will come to a judgment, they may contradict the truth, and be contradicted by it. Yet the truth must remain the same; and no exceptions can be fairly taken against the trinity, the union of two natures in Christ, the mysteries of Providence, the resurrection of the same body; nor even the eternal Sonship of Christ, if that, also, should involve a contradiction to reason. If human reason were eternal reason, it could not be contradicted by them; but who shall say how far it is so?" (*Remarks on the eternal Sonship of Christ.*)

Upon these principles Mr. Watson maintained the paramount authority of the word of God; and every attempt to explain away its great and vital doctrines, upon metaphysical and philosophic grounds, because of their mysteriousness, he met with uncompromising hostility. On

these grounds the doctrine of the trinity has been given up; the atonement of Christ has been denied by some, and limited by others; and in fact, all that is peculiar and saving in Christianity has often been abandoned. By an appeal to the Bible, the Protestant reformers shook the papal throne, and compelled the Romish Church to quail before them; and, by a steady adherence to the great principle of Protestantism, that the Bible, and nothing but the Bible, is the standard of appeal on all questions of theology, he waged a successful warfare against various forms of error, and established many minds in "the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

The following characteristic note, which was found in his desk after his decease, will serve to illustrate this part of his character. It was addressed to a speculatist in religion, who thought that he had made some new and wonderful discoveries respecting the person of Christ; and that the Christian Church had been in error on this subject in all ages. He had submitted his manuscript to Mr. Watson prior to its publication.

Mission House, June 15th.

DEAR SIR,—Your scheme is nothing but that of the old Gnostics, and other heretics of the first and second centuries, revived. It is, in my judgment, wholly unscriptural, and, *as such*, dangerous. My time does not allow me to say more than that you have meddled with things too high for you, and which can do nothing but harm,—vain speculations, having no basis of inspired truth at all. This is my opinion; and in faithfulness I give it you; but am otherwise employed than to enter into the subject.

As so many of Mr. Watson's discourses have been published, it is the less necessary to say much on the subject of his preaching. His sermons were never crude and indigested, but were invariably prepared with great care. Those which he preached on public occasions were generally written at full length; and in the latter years of his life especially, he was accustomed to write a copious outline of each discourse before its delivery, that the subject might be the more deeply impressed upon his mind. All the sermons contained in his printed works, except the first eleven, which he wrote expressly for publication, may be regarded as specimens of that preparation which it was his practice to make before he addressed his congregations.

The great aim of his preaching was usefulness; and hence, except in very peculiar cases, he decidedly disapproved of those sermons which consist mostly of elaborate metaphysical discussion, and the texts of which are used merely as a motto. The business of a Christian preacher, he thought, was to explain and enforce the pure word of God. "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." No man could have appeared to greater advantage than he, as an intellectual preacher, had fame been his object, and had he chosen to address himself only to the understanding and imagination of educated persons; but he felt that his business was especially with the consciences of mankind; and that his Lord had sent him, not to shine, or to amuse, but to convert sinners, and to build up believers in holiness: and these ends, he saw, could not be obtained but by the instrumentality of Divine truth, faithfully and plainly declared, and graciously applied by the Holy Spirit. To the end of his life, therefore, he became increasingly

partial to the expository mode of preaching; and in his ordinary ministry his sermons consisted entirely of deductions from his texts, the several parts of which he was careful to explain, and apply to the purposes of practical godliness. His sermons were evangelical, in the strict and proper sense of that much-abused term. Christ crucified was his favourite theme. He preached Christ in the glories of his Godhead, the infinite merit of his passion, and the plenitude of his grace and saving power; and so practical and impressive were the views which he presented of every truth upon which he expatiated, that those hearers must have been callous indeed who were not seriously affected under his energetic ministry.

Mr. Watson's manner in the pulpit was very solemn. Preaching, with him, was a very serious business. He felt the responsibility of standing between God and redeemed sinners, proposing to them in the Divine name the terms of reconciliation and acceptance; and he often trembled at the thought of being to some of his hearers "a savour of death unto death." His pallid countenance was therefore paler than usual when he entered the pulpit; and he frequently commenced the public services of religion with a quivering lip, and a faltering voice. In the delivery of his sermons he stood perfectly erect; and nearly all the action that he used was a slight motion of the right hand, with occasionally a significant shake of the head. He was generally calm and deliberate, and often gave strong indications of deep feeling; but his preaching was never declamatory. His appearance was dignified, and calculated to command respect and silent attention; and when he began to speak, his hearers felt that they were in the presence of a man who was qualified to instruct. From every thing approaching to affectation he was perfectly free; his pronunciation was chaste and elegant; and his language remarkable for simplicity and strength. He excelled equally in argument, exposition, and persuasion. In some of his sermons there was a remarkable tenderness of sentiment; but the tone of thought which principally characterized his preaching was that of sublimity. His conceptions often appeared to be even superhuman. The truths of Christianity, as they fell from his lips, were invested with peculiar authority; and were proposed, not as subjects of speculation, but to be received with meekness and submission, to be believed and practised. In his mind every feeling was lost in the desire to be useful; the intense solicitude to save his own soul, and them that heard him. There were not unfrequently in his sermons bursts of eloquence which were absolutely irresistible, and the impression of which was scarcely ever lost. After hearing him preach on the subject of the atonement, in the Methodist chapel at Leicester, Mr. Hall, who was then resident in that town, declared that for a long time he could think of nothing but Mr. Watson's sermon. He preached the substance of it to his own congregation; and for several successive Sundays he referred to it in the course of his ministry, and earnestly pressed his people also to hear "that great man," as he denominated Mr. Watson, should they ever have an opportunity. Speaking of Mr. Watson's preaching, in conversation with the Rev. Theophilus Lessey, whom he honoured with his friendship, Mr. Hall said, "He soars into regions of thought where no genius but his own can penetrate." It has been also remarked by Mr. Montgomery, who often heard Mr. Watson, and knew him well, "It was the character of his great mind to communi-

cate its own power and facility of comprehension to all minds that came under his influence. He so wholly possessed us with his spirit, that, during his progress through regions of intellect, or mazes of argument, we were not aware of the speed at which we were carried, or the elevation to which he had borne us beyond ourselves, till some mighty thought came rushing by, like a roll of thunder beneath the car of an aëronaut, reminding him that he is far above the clouds."

There is reason to believe that some of the most powerful and stirring appeals ever uttered by Mr. Watson from the pulpit were extempore, and were called forth by the occasion. His printed sermons, however, contain many passages which will give some conception of his power as a public speaker. We will adduce two,—one relating to the state of the heathen, and the other to the Gospel as the means of salvation.

"Are we the only strangers and sojourners before God? Look at the crowds which pass you in your busy streets. Cast up the population of Europe; plunge among the countless millions of India and China. They are all strangers and sojourners; their days on earth are as a shadow, and there is no 'expectation,' no 'delay.' They are hastening onward; and death and the grave are moving toward them. Under what affecting views does this consideration place our fellow men; and especially those of them who are living, or rather dying, in the darkness of paganism! They are indeed 'strangers;' but they know no better home. No word of reconciliation has opened to them a vista through the grave, and brought to light the distant immortality. They are 'sojourners,' too, and see the frailty of their tents; and often shudder while they hear the rents of their canvass flapping in the midnight wind; but no Redeemer has cheered them with the hope of a continuing city; and said to them, 'In my Father's house are many mansions.' You are indeed strangers with a home in prospect; they are strangers and sojourners without one. What a shadow to them is life! With us, indeed, it may be somewhat substantiated, by its connection with religion and eternity. To them its discipline is not referred to correction; its changeful scenes carry no moral lesson; its afflictions, no humility; its blessings, no hope. O pity your fellow sojourners in travel, without food, without the cheering impulse of a home, in depressing heartlessness, and painful anxiety! Around your camp, as around that of the Israelites, the manna falls. Invite them to it. The rock has been smitten for you, and follows all your steps with its pure stream. Call, shout to them, lest they perish, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!' Bid them behold your pillar of fire by night, and cloud by day, and join your camp, that they may have the same blessed guidance. Show them your altars, the smoke of your atonement; bid them come up to your tabernacle; and make them know that the desert of life itself may be cheered with songs, songs of salvation, even in the house of their pilgrimage; and that, although here they have no continuing city, they may seek and find one to come."——

"Where, then, is the remedy? It is in the Gospel of the grace of God. There the deep and pressing want of the world is met. A God is given back to them who have lost the knowledge of him; and stands confessed before his creatures in all his majesty and in all his grace. A system of morals is ushered in, pure as their Author, and command-

ing in all their sanctions and motives. The lovely majesty of religion is presented; not the form arrayed in the wild habiliments of superstition, agitated with demoniacal inspirations, stained with gore, and revelling in human misery; but the form of truth and love united, inviting confidence, distributing blessings, and spreading all around her an atmosphere of light, and comfort, and healing. The true propitiation is presented,—the dying Saviour, the powerful Advocate with God, the Friend of man, Jesus the Saviour; and the nations look unto him from the ends of the earth, and are saved. O glorious visitation! and 'not in word only, but in power!' Here lies the efficiency of the Gospel; this it is which distinguishes it from every thing else. All else is human; this only is Divine. Wherever there is the Gospel, there is God: for, 'lo, I am with you.' It is not the cloud of the Divine majesty only, but the cloud of the Divine presence. It is the voice of God, calling the prisoners of earth to come forth and show themselves; and the arm of God, throwing back the bolt of their dungeon, and leading them into liberty. It is the rain which falls upon the desert heath, and the vital spirit in it which gives it its fertilizing energy. It is the word of God; but it is also his inspiration, the breathing of his Holy Spirit; like the gales of spring, not violent, not rushing, but every where wafting life, and converting the wintry heath into fruitfulness and health. It is the mighty chariot of salvation, Messiah's moving throne, instinct with life, every sweeping wheel full of eyes, and full of energy. It moves with resistless velocity; before it fly 'the gods,' the vain idols, 'who have not made the heavens and the earth,' and yet have usurped the honours of God. Affrighted as the lambs at the sound of mighty thunderings, they fly before, while, behind, it leaves in its progress a train of light and blessing ample as the earth, and welcome as the day-spring to them who sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death."

A very important branch of ministerial duty is that of conducting public worship; and in this Mr. Watson was an example of seriousness and decorum. The manner in which he recited his hymns, that they might be sung by the congregation, was remarkably impressive. Had they been the spontaneous effusions of his own mind, and called forth by the occasion, they could not have been pronounced with greater propriety. The tones of his voice were in perfect unison with the hallowed strains of the Wesleyan hymn book; and that incomparable volume was never made to speak with happier effect than when in his hands. The repetition of a single stanza has often produced a visible impression upon a large assembly, at once repressing every appearance of inattention, and producing a feeling of solemnity and awe; while the devout part of his hearers frequently wondered how it was that they had never previously seen the full beauty and force of the hymns which they had long been accustomed to sing. In Mr. Watson's public prayers there was great copiousness and variety. He was often minute in the confession of sin, especially the corruptions of the heart; and he was in the habit of bringing the concerns of the Church and of the world, in all their extent, before the Lord, and of commending them to his providence and grace. The fallen Churches of Christendom, the apostate and unbelieving Jews, and the perishing heathen, were specially remembered by him in his addresses to the throne of grace. His spirit seemed to bow in the deepest reverence and self abasement before the Lord, as "a just God and a Saviour;" and he always most

distinctly recognized the atonement and intercession of Christ, as the only medium through which sinners can obtain access to him, and be saved. "The spirit of interceding grace" appeared constantly to rest upon him; and his supplications were remarkable for the earnestness and pleading importunity with which they were uttered. On many occasions he seemed to realize even more than Job desired, when he said, in reference to his Maker, "O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even unto his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments." "More favoured than the saints of old," who were but imperfectly acquainted with the mediatorial scheme, Mr. Watson saw the way into the holiest opened, by the blood of Jesus; and he did often "draw near" in such a manner, that the Divine presence was sensibly realized, and his fellow worshippers were compelled to own, "It is good for us to be here." His public devotions were equally removed from cold formality on the one hand, and an unhallowed levity and presumption on the other. They were the devotions of a conscious sinner; but of a sinner justified by the blood of Jesus, and inspired with a filial disposition by the Divine Comforter whom the Saviour promised.

While Mr. Watson was free from bigotry, and a narrow, sectarian spirit, he was most cordial in his attachment to his own religious denomination. The doctrines held by the Wesleyan body, he believed to be those of the New Testament; and as such he embraced and defended them. To the Wesleyan discipline he was equally attached; and he deprecated all attempts to innovate upon its vital principles. It has, by the Divine blessing, preserved the orthodoxy and spirituality of the body for near a century; and he felt that it ought not to be tampered with, especially by men of speculative habits, and of questionable piety, who might wish to render it more conformable to the principles of a secular policy. Whenever Methodism was assailed, or the character of its founder was a subject of misrepresentation, he appeared as the unflinching advocate of both; and whatever reputation he possessed as a man of talent and genius, he willingly employed it in the service of his brethren, and the cause which they had espoused. He never seemed to think that he had done enough for the body to which he belonged. His days and nights were devoted to its interests; and his life was shortened by the ardour of his zeal to extend the Wesleyan missions, and to improve the piety and intelligence of the societies by the productions of his pen. In the introduction to his will, which he wrote only a few weeks before his decease, he declared his affection for his brethren in the strongest terms; and the gift of his literary property to the connection was an expression of the same cordial and disinterested regard for a people among whom he had obtained the "pearl of great price," and whom, above all others, he esteemed and loved. It was his judgment that a part of the proceeds of the Wesleyan book establishment in the City-Road should be appropriated to the education of the junior ministers; and it was with this view that he was so munificent a donor to that concern. The improvement of the Methodist ministry lay near his heart. He saw that his esteemed brethren possessed the requisite talent; and he was anxious that this talent should receive the best direction, and be always found connected with deep piety, and laborious zeal.

During the three years in which he resided in the City-Road, Mr.

Watson was a frequent visitant to the Wesleyan book room in the immediate neighbourhood of his own house; and its judicious and successful management by his friend Mr. Mason afforded him the highest pleasure. He often saw from six to ten tons of books sent from that place in the course of one month, to supply the home stations and the foreign missions; and when he reflected upon the character and tendency of these publications, his satisfaction arose to gratitude. He knew that many of them found their way to obscure villages and hamlets, and to distant colonies, where scarcely any other literature is known; and that all of them were calculated to promote that holiness of spirit and conduct which is the great end of man. These were facts to which he often referred; and he thanked God for the means thus supplied for counteracting ungodliness and infidelity. The influence of his own writings upon the Wesleyan body has already been very great. The catechisms which he compiled instruct our children; his "Conversations" direct our youth; and his other works exert no common influence upon the thinkings of our preachers, both itinerant and local, as well as upon private individuals. The records of religious experience, which constitute so prominent a part of Methodist literature, and which even some individuals belonging to the body have affected to despise, had his cordial approbation; and when he sometimes heard it urged that the Methodists ought either to enlarge their own Magazine, or establish a Review, he invariably expressed a hope that, whatever arrangements of this kind might be made, "the blessed experiences of our pious people" would always form a prominent object in the periodical works of the connection. The religion of the heart, which prepares men to walk with God in singleness of purpose, and to die in peace, he regarded as the grand end of Methodism in all its apparatus.

As a colleague, and the superintendent of a circuit, Mr. Watson was perfectly frank in all his intercourse with his brethren, making them acquainted with his plans, and taking his full share of labour and responsibility. In the quarterly visitation of the classes, for the renewal of the society tickets, he took sufficient time to inquire into the spiritual state of each member; and it was a privilege of no common order to listen to his kind, discriminating, and appropriate advices. With a truly pastoral solicitude he would enter into the various cases and circumstances of his charge, and so adapt his counsels and encouragements, that none could fail to find a portion for himself, while at the same time he participated in the general benefit. There was a force and an appropriateness in his addresses on these occasions which often produced a very deep and hallowed impression.

To the Wesleyan doctrine of present and conscious salvation from the guilt and power of sin, by faith in the sacrificial blood of Christ, he was strongly attached. "O brother Jackson," said he to the writer of these memoirs, in their last interview, "we who have had a Methodist training can never be sufficiently thankful to God for the two great lessons which we were taught in early life,—the atonement of Christ; and the use to be made of that atonement:" intimating that, while some people acknowledge Jesus Christ as a mere martyr to the truth, there are others who regard the atonement of his death only as an article of their creed, without understanding the nature of the salvation connected with it, or the faith by which that salvation is obtained, and enjoyed in the present life.

Mr. Watson's Methodism was of a purely Wesleyan character. He was no theoretic dissenter, and cherished no feelings of hostility to the religious establishment of this country. An established Church, recognizing the grand principles of evangelical truth, and accompanied by a legal protection of all who prefer a different creed and mode of worship, he declared to be in his view the most likely means of promoting true religion and morality, and by consequence the national welfare. He was far indeed from thinking that the Church of England had done all that she ought to have done for the instruction and spiritual benefit of the people; but her formularies embody all the vital truths of Christianity; her services keep the subject of religion continually before the public mind; not a few of her clergy have been and still are among the most useful and exemplary of the ministers of Christ; and her general influence is therefore great and salutary. In his writings he repeatedly speaks of her as "the mother of us all;" and he describes the sanctified and profound erudition embodied in the works of her divines, as "the light of Christendom." It was not indeed either his wish or his hope, that the Church should sanction all the functionaries and machinery of Methodism, or that the Methodists should abandon any of the peculiarities of their discipline, which has been of such vast utility in promoting the interests of religion; for this he thought would be beneficial to neither party, and would require from both such a sacrifice of principle as they ought not to make; but he was desirous that the Methodist body should always stand in a friendly relation to the Church, aiming not at party purposes, but simply at the advancement of true religion. Few things therefore gave him greater pain than the calumnious and unprovoked attacks upon the Methodists, which have been made of late years by the conductors of some periodical works professing to advocate the cause of the establishment; because he saw that they were only calculated to excite a spirit of recrimination, and alienate the Methodists more and more from the Church, to the injury of Christian charity, and of the work of God. The Methodists he thought might derive great advantage from the sobriety and sound learning of the Church; and Churchmen might be benefited by Methodist zeal and activity. When he published his Life of Mr. Wesley, one of the prelates addressed to him a friendly letter, expressing the general pleasure which he had felt in the perusal of the work; and Mr. Watson remarked, when he read it, "If these men would only treat us with ordinary kindness and respect, instead of denouncing us as schismatics, they would find us to be among their best friends in the approaching struggle." His admiration of the liturgy was unbounded; and he greatly enjoyed the use of it in the Wesleyan chapels on the Sunday morning. Its beauties as a literary composition recommended it to his fine taste; but it was more strongly endeared to him by the spirit of pure and elevated devotion which it breathes. When he was confined to his house by sickness, he read it with his family as a substitute for public worship; and he said to the writer of these pages, about a year before his death, that if he were a private individual, and there were no Methodist congregations with whom he could unite in Divine worship, he should attend the religious services of the established Church in preference to any others, because of the solemnity and order which are secured by the use of the liturgy. To the public reading of so large a portion of the Holy Scriptures in

the services of the Church of England he also often referred, as a peculiar excellence. These sentiments were not the result of prejudice and early habit, but of observation and deep thought. Beside, as a Methodist preacher, Mr. Watson could not forget, that the revival of religion to which the name of Methodism has been given, originated in the established Church; and that Mr. Wesley, the founder of the connection,—his gifted brother, the writer of its hymns,—Mr. Fletcher, the defender of its doctrines,—and Dr. Coke, the father of the Methodist missions,—were all clergymen; and, excepting one, were educated and nurtured in the bosom of the establishment. It is also a fact worthy of being placed upon public record, that the most eminent men among the Methodist preachers have all cherished a cordial regard for the Church, while they have been the ornaments and stay of their own community. This remark applies particularly to Mr. Benson, Dr. Adam Clarke, and Mr. Watson.

The crowning excellence of Mr. Watson's character was his piety. It was this that guided him in the application of his talents, and gave a superior force and energy to his mind. There was nothing visionary and mystical in his piety; it was thoroughly Scriptural and practical. He cherished deep and impressive views of the evil of sin, the purity and spirituality of the moral law, and of the holiness and justice of God; and from merely abstract conceptions of the Divine mercy he could derive no hope. It was upon the atonement for sin made by the death of Christ that all his confidence rested; because he saw that this doctrine is one of the most prominent truths of the Bible, and reconciles the exercise of mercy to sinners with the authority of law and the claims of justice. To the redemption of mankind by the death of Christ, his attention was daily and hourly directed. Speaking on this subject in one of his sermons, he says, "'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.' In that flesh he suffered. How much we cannot tell; but 'no sorrow was like unto his sorrow.' It was bodily pain; for that was part of the penalty. It was mental pain; for it was the hiding of God's face. It was the array of demons; it was blackness and darkness; it was hell,—the sufferings of the damned accumulated in the person of our Sufferer. The spirit trembled, and the body died. This was the redemption price; and he rose to claim the right of man, the special object of his benevolence and salvation." It was from the meritorious passion of his Saviour, of which he entertained these affecting views, that his chief motives to piety were derived. Here he saw the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and loathed himself as a depraved and guilty creature; here he saw the exceeding riches of the Divine compassion, and he aspired to the possession and exercise of perfect love in return; and in sight of the cross he felt his obligations to present to the Lord his entire person, "a holy, living sacrifice." Happily conscious of his acceptance in the Beloved, of the constant influence of the Holy Spirit vouchsafed to him through the mediation of Christ, and of his title to endless blessedness in heaven, he knew not how he could adequately express the sense which he entertained of the mercy of his Saviour. The fire of grateful love, kindled at the altar of the cross, shed a lustre over his whole spirit and conduct. His missionary zeal was zeal for the honour and rights of Christ, as the

sovereign Lord of a redeemed world. His yearning pity for the heathen, and for the unregenerate part of mankind in every place, was a pity derived from the tears and groans of Calvary. That Christ was honoured and adored among men who were recently in a savage state, afforded him the richest satisfaction; and it was with feelings of no ordinary delight, that he contemplated the worshipping assemblies of converted heathens, lifting up their voices in the sublime strains of the universal Church, and in the spirit of a pure devotion saying,

> "We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
> All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting."

The prevailing sentiment of his heart was that which has been so eloquently expressed by Milton:—"Come forth out of thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth! Put on the visible robes of thy imperial majesty; take up that unlimited sceptre which thy almighty Father hath bequeathed thee; for now the voice of thy bride calls thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed."

His piety was at once improved and manifested by a devotional spirit and habit. He evidently spent much time in secret prayer, and in holy converse with God; and he diligently read the Scriptures, not merely to find matter for the pulpit and the press, but with a reference to the regulation of his own heart and life. When he read the sacred Scriptures in his family, or with the social party, his manner was reverent and devout; and he often paused, as if to receive the full impression of the hallowed sentiments to which his lips gave utterance, and to which others were listening with fixed attention. It was the gracious feeling thus excited, and which by the Divine blessing he succeeded in communicating to his hearers, that gave the principal charm to his public ministry. The strong and permanent effects produced by his sermons were not occasioned so much by the comprehensiveness and sublimity of his views, the force of his reasonings, and the richness and power of his imagination, as by the tone of piety by which they were characterized, and the holy influence by which they were attended. He felt the truths which he delivered in all their weight and importance; and under a corresponding impression, his hearers became silent and prayerful, and were moved to a surrender of their hearts to the Lord. The more pious his hearers were, the more they valued his preaching. He showed them not only the external magnificence and beauty of the temple of truth, but he conducted them into the interior of the sacred edifice, and led them from one compartment to another, till he placed them in the holiest of all, and fixed their reverent gaze upon "the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat." The same remark will apply to his conversation, which was intellectual and instructive in the highest degree; but it was also directed to holy purposes. He spoke of public events in their connection with the providence of God, and the interests of the Church of Christ; and of personal religion, and the progress of Christianity in the world, in connection with the mediatorial scheme, and the work of the Holy Spirit; and many a social party was, by his wisdom and cheerful piety, rendered a means of grace.

At the close of the year 1831, he thus speaks of himself, in a letter to the Rev. William M. Bunting, who enjoyed his friendship. It shows the deep sense which he entertained of the responsibility con-

nected with the sacred office; and the feelings with which he contemplated the termination of his public labours. "My health is very feeble, and I have hard work to keep on; yet I never loved my work so much, and, I trust, never laboured more to do it in the solemn view of eternity. One thing I feel, standing upon the close of active life, (for much longer of efficiency cannot be hoped for by me,) that I have read, prayed, preached, in all far below the true standard of ministerial devotedness; and that, if life were again to begin, I should endeavour, at least, to enter more fully into the spirit of the only work on earth which directly connects itself with 'glory, honour, and immortality.' I seem rather to have been in a dream than broad awake. Still, these humbling thoughts serve to heighten the infinite grace which gives the sweet sense of acceptance; and make me feel more powerfully the emphasis of, 'By grace are ye saved.' May your course, my dear friend, be always increasingly bright and influential; and may your ministry fix many gems in your diadem at last!"

Mr. Watson was a remarkable instance of sanctified affliction. For many years his personal sufferings were great, and he seemed to be suspended over the gulf of eternity by a slender thread. The frequent interruption of his labours and projects gave exercise to submission to the Divine will, till his "soul was as a weaned child;" and even the desire of life for the purpose of usefulness became extinct.—The prayer which he had often offered was fully answered:—

> "With me in the fire remain,
> Till like burnish'd gold I shine,
> Meet, through consecrated pain,
> To see the face Divine."

His constant anticipations of death led to realizing views of the world of spirits; and "the death bed of the just" has seldom been more honoured than in his case. Those who witnessed the scene can never forget it.

> "He taught us how to live; and,—O too high
> A price for knowledge!—taught us how to die!"

Till within a little while of his dissolution, his powerful intellect was unimpaired; and he was fully aware that in a few days he should be in another world; yet he walked through the valley of the shadow of death with a spirit "calm and undismayed." His peace flowed like a river, and his hope was full of immortality. Upon the sacrificial blood of his Saviour he placed his exclusive reliance; and he looked for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Being now freed from the burden of the flesh, which had so frequently interfered with his mental exercises, and with his active services in the Church, and had so long proved a source of intense suffering, his sanctified spirit knows no more pain,

> "And hears the unexpressive nuptial song
> In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
> There entertain him all the hosts above,
> In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
> That sing, and singing in their glory move,
> And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes."

END OF WATSON'S LIFE.

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